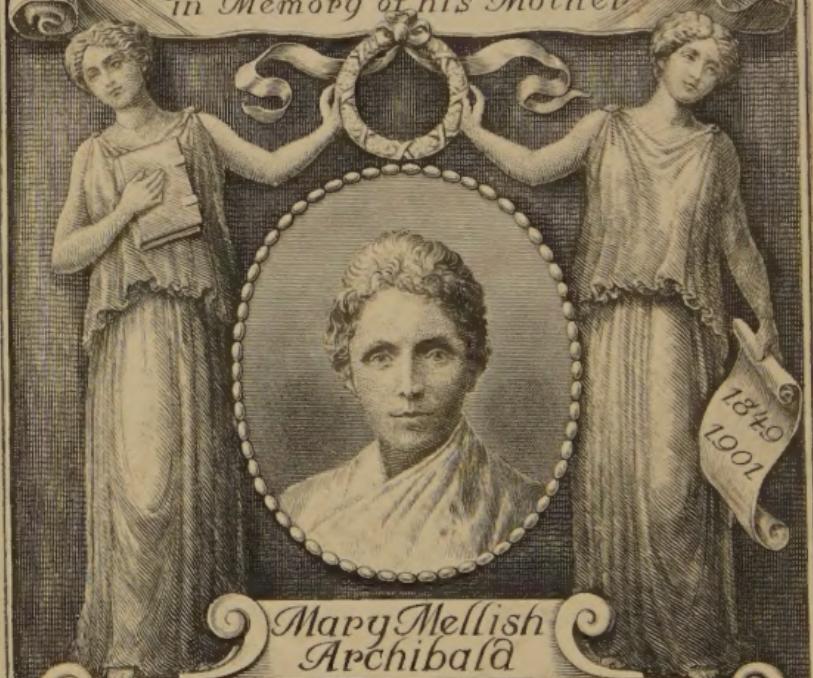




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Mary Mellish  
Archibald

Graduate, M.L.A. 1867  
Teacher, 1869 - 71.  
Chief Preceptress, 1871 - 73.  
Lady Principal 1885 - January 1901

Mary Mellish  
Archibald



THE  
ANNOTATED EDITION  
OF THE  
ENGLISH POETS.

EDITED BY

ROBERT BELL,

AUTHOR OF

'THE HISTORY OF RUSSIA,' 'LIVES OF THE ENGLISH POETS,'  
ETC.



LONDON:  
JOHN W. PARKER AND SON, WEST STRAND.

1854.

Mary Mellish  
Archibald  
Memorial

'I hold that no man can have any just conception of the History of England who has not often read, and meditated, and learnt to love the great Poets of England. The greatest of them, such as Chaucer, Shakspeare, Massinger, George Herbert, Milton, Cowley, Dryden, Pope, and Burns, often throw more rich and brilliant colours, and sometimes even more clear and steady lights, on the times and the doings of our forefathers, than are to be gathered out of all the chroniclers together, from the Venerable Bede to the Philosophical Hume. They are at least the greatest and the best commentators on those chroniclers.'—*Sir James Stephen on Desultory and Systematic Reading.*

ANNOTATED EDITION  
OF  
THE ENGLISH POETS.

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THE necessity for a revised and carefully Annotated Edition of the English Poets may be found in the fact, that no such publication exists. The only Collections we possess consist of naked and frequently imperfect Texts, put forth without sufficient literary supervision. Independently of other defects, these voluminous Collections are incomplete as a whole, from their omissions of many Poets whose works are of the highest interest, while the total absence of critical and illustrative Notes renders them comparatively worthless to the Student of our National Literature.

A few of our Poets have been edited separately by men well qualified for the undertaking, and selected Specimens have appeared, accompanied by notices, which, as far as they go, answer the purpose for which they were intended. But these do not supply the want which is felt of a Complete Body of English Poetry, edited throughout with judgment and integrity, and combining those features of research, typographical elegance, and economy of price, which the present age demands.

The Edition now proposed will be distinguished from all preceding Editions in many important respects. It will include the works of several Poets entirely omitted from previous Collections, especially those stores of Lyrical and Ballad Poetry in which our Literature is richer than that of any other Country, and which, independently of their poetical claims, are peculiarly interesting as illustrations of Historical Events and National customs.

By the exercise of a strict principle of selection, this Edition will be rendered intrinsically more valuable than any of its predecessors. The Text will in all instances be scrupulously collated, and accompanied by Biographical, Critical, and Historical Notes.

## THE ENGLISH POETS.

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An INTRODUCTORY VOLUME will present a succinct account of English Poetry from the earliest times down to a period which will connect it with the Series of the Poets, through whose Lives the History of our Poetical Literature will be continued to the present time. Occasional volumes will be introduced, in which Specimens, with connecting Notices and Commentaries, will be given of those Poets whose works are not of sufficient interest to be reproduced entire. The important materials gathered from previously unexplored sources by the researches of the last quarter of a century will be embodied wherever they may be available in the general design; and by these means it is hoped that the Collection will be more complete than any that has been hitherto attempted, and that it will be rendered additionally acceptable as comprising in its course a Continuous History of English Poetry.

By the arrangements that will be adopted, the Works of the principal Poets may be purchased separately and independently of the rest. The Occasional Volumes, containing, according to circumstances, Poetry of a particular Class or Period, Collections illustrative of Customs, Manners, and Historical events, or Specimens, with Critical Annotations, of the Minor Poets, will also be complete in themselves.

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*A Volume will be published Monthly, price 2s. 6d.,  
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# POETICAL WORKS

OF

## JOHN DRYDEN

EDITED BY ROBERT BELL

VOLUME I



LONDON

JOHN W. PARKER AND SON WEST STRAND

1854

PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN.

## ADVERTISEMENT.

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IN committing to the press a new edition of the Poetical Works of DRYDEN, a few words of explanation are necessary respecting the plan on which it has been prepared.

The whole of the Poems, excluding the Translations, are printed in the order of their composition. The volumes open with Dryden's first poem, and close with his last. This method, which presents the authentic materials of a mental autobiography, and traces the poet onward in his relations with contemporary literature, appears to me to possess manifest advantages over the usual modes of distribution or classification. Desirable, wherever it can be carried out, in reference to all poets, it is especially desirable in reference to Dryden, whose individual progress is identical with a revolution in English Poetry.

The only exceptions are a few minor pieces, the dates of which are for the most part uncertain; and the Prologues and Epilogues, which have been placed under a separate chronological arrangement, for the

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sake of the continuous light they throw upon the History of the Stage, and the manners and customs of the time. The collection here made, will be found by far the fullest and most complete that has yet appeared.

The Text has been carefully collated from the earliest and most recent editions; but that of Scott has been generally followed, as being, upon the whole, the most accurate.

It has been my chief aim, in the Notes and Introductions, to combine illustrative biographical details and criticisms with historical commentary; so that the reader, not previously familiar with the events and characteristics of the period, might easily comprehend and appreciate the spirit and purpose of the Poems. Abounding in political and personal allusions, and bearing directly on the controversies of the day, Dryden's works demand a large measure of explanation; but I have not been unmindful of the value of brevity, and have endeavoured to compress my annotations into the shortest compass consistent with the variety of topics they embrace.

The industry of Malone and Scott left little to be gleaned by subsequent biographers; and I scarcely ventured to indulge a hope that my researches in that direction would be rewarded with much success. The

readiness and courtesy, however, with which my inquiries have been met in all quarters, have enabled me to enrich a short notice of the life of the poet with several hitherto unpublished letters, and at least one new and very material fact.

To Sir Henry E. L. Dryden, Bart., of Canons-Ashby, Northamptonshire, the representative of the poet's family, my first acknowledgments are due, for the kindness with which he afforded me access to the family papers and letters in his possession, and the liberality with which he placed them at my discretion. From the sources thus opened to me, I derived the letters of Honor and Ann Driden, and the letter of John Dryden to his friend William Walsh, of Abberley, Worcestershire, containing strictures on that gentleman's poems. This last letter was not at Canons-Ashby when Mr. Malone was in communication with Lady Dryden, and the former letters he does not appear to have seen.

I am under a similar obligation to Sir Thomas Phillipps, Bart., of Middlehall, Broadway, Worcestershire, for the promptitude with which he gave me permission to publish five inedited letters of Dryden's, forming part of a collection of sixteen autograph letters of the poet, which are bound together in a volume in his possession. Of these sixteen letters,

eleven passed through the hands of Malone, who published them in the *Miscellaneous Prose Works*, where they will be found under the Nos. xxv., xxvi., xxviii., xxx., xxxi., xxxv., xxxviii., and xl. The remaining five are now printed for the first time.

Charles Beville Dryden, Esq., the youngest son of the Lady Dryden with whom Mr. Malone corresponded, has also rendered me essential services. To that gentleman I am indebted for additional information on the subject of portraits, and for some interesting personal details; but, principally, for the discovery of an Exchequer Warrant, dated in 1684, the importance of which, in reference to the most memorable passage in the life of the poet, cannot be over-rated.

R. B.

## CONTENTS OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

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### ADVERTISEMENT TO THE PRESENT EDITION.

---

MEMOIR . . . . . p. 9

---

### POEMS BY JOHN DRYDEN.

UPON THE DEATH OF LORD HASTINGS . . . . .	99
TO JOHN HODDESDEN ON HIS DIVINE EPIGRAMS .	103
HEROIC STANZAS ON THE DEATH OF OLIVER CROM- WELL . . . . .	104
ASTREA REDUX: A POEM ON THE RESTORATION OF KING CHARLES II. . . . .	113
AN ADDRESS TO SIR ROBERT HOWARD . . . . .	126
A PANEGYRIC ON THE CORONATION OF CHARLES II.	130
AN ADDRESS TO LORD CHANCELLOR HYDE . . . .	134
SATIRE ON THE DUTCH . . . . .	139
TO THE LADY CASTLEMAINE, UPON HER ENCOURAGING HIS FIRST PLAY . . . . .	141
AN ADDRESS TO DR. CHARLETON . . . . .	143

TO HER ROYAL HIGHNESS, THE DUCHESS, ON THE MEMORABLE VICTORY GAINED BY THE DUKE OVER THE HOLLANDERS, JUNE 3, 1665. AND ON HER JOURNEY INTO THE NORTH. . . . .	p. 145
ANNUS MIRABILIS: THE YEAR OF WONDERS, 1666 .	149
TO MR. LEE, ON HIS ALEXANDER . . . . .	206
AN ESSAY UPON SATIRE . . . . .	207
TO THE EARL OF ROSCOMMON, ON HIS EXCELLENT ESSAY ON TRANSLATED VERSE. . . . .	218
✓ ABSALOM AND ACHITOPHEL. PART THE FIRST . .	221
DITTO. PART THE SECOND . . . . .	264

# JOHN DRYDEN.

1631—1700.

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THE earliest record of the Dryden family traces them to the County of Cumberland, where they were possessed of the estate of Staffhill, in the sixteenth century. At that time the name was spelt Driden.\* The subsequent alteration in the orthography was introduced by the poet, an innovation which gave great offence to some of his relations, but which has been since adopted by all the surviving branches.†

The first of the family residing at Staffhill, of whom we have any account, was the great-great-grandfather of the poet. He was married to a lady of the name of Nicholson. His son John (said to have been a schoolmaster‡) migrated into Northamptonshire, where he acquired the estate of Canons-

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\* Old Anthony Wood, who was intimate with some members of the family, and Aubrey in his *Lives*, both spell it Dreyden. In other places, the name is spelt Dreydon.

† A recent examination of the family papers at Canons-Ashby, for free access to which I am indebted to the liberal courtesy of Sir Henry Dryden, Bart., enables me to state that the altered orthography was also adopted at a very early date by one of the poet's cousins. In a collection of MS. letters from and to Sir John Driden, ranging between 1640 and 1658, there are three letters written by Erasmus Dryden, son of Sir John, and brother to John Driden of Chesterton, bearing the several dates of 25th September and 21st October, 1656, and 1st Jan. 1657-8, in which the name is spelt Dryden, both in the signature and superscription. Malone, I presume, had never seen these letters.

‡ Fasti Oxoniensis. Bridges, in his *History of Northamptonshire* (quoted by Bliss), doubts Wood's information on this point, as he thinks it improbable Sir John Cope would have married his daughter to a person in 'low circumstances.' Scott, who seems to have entertained a similar opinion of schoolmasters, adopts the doubt.

Ashby (the residence of the present representative of the family) by his marriage with Elizabeth, the daughter of Sir John Cope, of that place. From that period we hear no more of the Dridens of Cumberland.

Erasmus,\* the son of John Driden, of Canons-Ashby, who inherited the estate, was born on the 20th of December, 1553. He filled the office of High Sheriff of the County, under Queen Elizabeth, and was created a Baronet in 1619. This gentleman married the second daughter and coheiress of William Wilkes, of Hodwell, in Warwickshire,† by whom he had six children. Of these there were three sons, John, afterwards second Baronet, married to the daughter of Sir John Beville, of Chesterton, in Huntingdonshire;‡ William, who had an estate at Farndon; and Erasmus, the father of the poet, who possessed a small property at the village of Blakesley, about three miles from Canons-Ashby, in the neighbourhood of Tichmarsh. This gentleman married Mary, the daughter of the Rev. Henry Pickering, a puritan minister,

\* The name of Erasmus, transmitted through many members of the family, is stated by Wood to have been derived from the famous Erasmus of Rotterdam, who, he says, stood godfather for the son of John Driden. But an examination of dates will show that this must be an error. The name was more probably, as Baker suggests, derived from Erasmus, the son of Sir John Cope, who may himself, perhaps, have enjoyed the sponsorial honour conferred by Wood on his nephew.

† Aubrey, in his article on Spenser, tells us that the author of the *Faerie Queen* was intimate with Sir Erasmus. The whole passage is curious and interesting:—‘He (Spenser) was an acquaintance and frequenter of Sir Erasmus Dreyden. His mistress, Rosalind, was a kinswoman of Sir Erasmus’s lady. The chamber there, at Sir Erasmus’s, is still called Mr. Spenser’s chamber. Lately, at the college [Pembroke Hall, Cambridge], taking down the wainscot of his chamber, they found an abundance of cards with stanzas of the *Faerie Queen* written on them.’—*Lives, &c.*, ii. 541. This anecdote about the cards appears, by a note attached to it, to have been derived ‘from J. Dryden, Esq., Poete Laureate.’ It would have been pleasant to have found the name of Spenser still associated with the seat of the Dryden family, but local tradition is silent respecting him. There is no room at Canons-Ashby now known as Mr. Spenser’s chamber.

‡ The Chesterton property descended to John Driden, the second son of Sir John, and cousin-german of the poet. It afterwards devolved on Robert Pigott, nephew of John Driden, and was sold to Mr. Waller about 1777. The house at Chesterton was pulled down thirty years ago.

and youngest son of Sir Gilbert Pickering. It appears that their families were doubly related by intermarriage, John, the eldest son of Sir Gilbert Pickering, who succeeded to the title, having married the youngest daughter of Sir Erasmus Driden. The other daughters were married into ‘very honourable families;’ the eldest to Sir John Phillips, and the second to Sir John Hartop.

Erasmus and Mary Driden had fourteen children, ten daughters, and four sons. Of this numerous issue, John Dryden, the poet, born on the 9th of August, 1631, in the parsonage-house\* of Oldwincl<sup>e</sup> All-Saints, was the eldest.† Mr. Malone has traced, with his usual industry, the fortunes of nearly all the children of this marriage. Two of the daughters married in the country; a third became the wife of a clergyman, in Huntingdon; a fourth married a merchant of London, and a fifth a tobacconist in Newgate-street. The second son, who afterwards inherited the estate of Canons-Abbey, through failure of issue in the direct line, was a grocer in King-street, Westminster; the third went to Jamaica, where he died; and the fourth was a tobacconist in London.

There are two small parishes in Northamptonshire, lying close together, called Aldwincl<sup>e</sup>, or Oldwincl<sup>e</sup> All-Saints, and Oldwincl<sup>e</sup> St. Peter’s. In neither of these is there any record of the baptism of the poet. The absence of such evidence, if the registers were perfect, would tend to confirm the imputation cast upon him by some of his contemporaries, that his

\* The parsonage-house is still standing, and a particular room in it is still known as ‘Dryden’s Room.’ A very touching circumstance occurred there a few years ago, when a young lady who was dangerously ill in the house, desired to be removed into ‘Dryden’s Room’ to die. Her wish was complied with, and her death took place in the chamber with which the name of the poet is traditionally connected. It is a small room, such as in country houses is usually appropriated as a writing-room.

† From the order in which the bequests are enumerated in his father’s will, Malone thinks it probable that some of Dryden’s sisters were senior to him. This of course is pure conjecture; but there is no doubt that he was the eldest son.

family were anabaptists, and that he never was christened; but the registry of Oldwincle All-Saints does not extend farther back than 1650, the early period, including the year of Dryden's birth, having long since disappeared. The register of Oldwincle St. Peter's has been preserved entire, but it contains no entry whatever relating to the family. The reasonable inference therefore is, that the poet was baptized at the Church of Oldwincle All-Saints, especially as such was the local tradition when Malone was collecting materials for his life.\* The circumstance of the birth having taken place at the parsonage-house of Oldwincle, and not at the residence of Erasmus Driden, at Blakesley (where it is quite certain he was not born),† is accounted for on the supposition that the mother of the poet was then on a visit to her father, who may probably have been the curate of the parish, to the benefice of which he was presented some years afterwards.

John Dryden received the rudiments of his education at Tichmarsh, or at the neighbouring school at Oundle. ‘We boast,’ says the inscription at Tichmarsh, ‘that he was bred and had his first learning here, where he has often made us happie by his kind visits and most delightful conversation.’‡ He was afterwards admitted a king’s scholar at Westminster School, under Dr. Busby, for whom he contracted a warm and

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\* I am informed by Mr. Charles Beville Dryden, to whom I am under other obligations, which will be duly acknowledged in the proper place, that upon a recent visit to the locality he found that the honour of having given birth to the poet was claimed with equal confidence by both parishes.

† This fact is placed beyond doubt by the inscription on the monument at Tichmarsh, erected by his relative, Mrs. Creed. We learn also from the same inscription that Mr. Erasmus Dryden was a justice of the peace of the county, and that he married the daughter of the Rev. Dr. Pickering, ‘of Aldwinkle,’ which seems to imply that Dr. Pickering was residing there at the time of the marriage.

‡ Dryden kept up his relations with Northamptonshire all through his life; and several allusions to his visits to Tichmarsh, Oundle, &c., will be found in his letters, from one of which we learn that he had taken his seat in the Oundle coach nearly a week in advance; that the journey from Oundle to London occupied two days; and that his friends Southerne and Congreve were to meet him on the road, within four miles of town. This was in 1695.

lasting regard.\* That eminent person appears to have been the first to discover and cultivate his poetical talent; but of his performances in this way at Westminster the only record we have is, that he translated the third Satire of Persius, which was prescribed to him as a Thursday night's exercise. Other pieces of a similar kind were produced, and remained in the hands of Dr. Busby, but have never been recovered. Here also, in 1649, he wrote an *Elegy on the Death of Lord Hastings*, and some commendatory verses on the *Divine Epigrams* of his friend, John Hoddesdon, both of which were published in the following year.

On the 11th of May, 1650, Dryden was elected to a scholarship in Trinity College, Cambridge, under the Rev. John Templer; took the degree of Bachelor of Arts in January, 1653-4; and was made Master of Arts in 1657, by dispensation from the Archbishop of Canterbury. Of his career in college nothing is known, except that he was put out of commons for a fortnight, in 1652, for disobedience to the vice-master, and 'contumacy in taking his punishment inflicted by him.' The story, circulated by Shadwell, that he was obliged to fly from college for calumniating a 'nobleman,'†

\* He was not insensible, however, to that severity in the use of the rod with which the Doctor's name is familiarly identified. Dryden never forgot the scenes of that kind he had witnessed at Westminster; and in the year before his death, writing to Mr. Montagu about some verses (the epistle to his cousin) upon which he had bestowed an unusual amount of correction, he says—'I am now in fear I have purged them out of their spirit; as our Master Busby used to whip a boy so long, till he made him a confirmed blockhead.' Notwithstanding, however, this rigorous discipline, Dryden was so strongly impressed with Bushy's high moral character and excellent system of tuition, that he placed two of his sons under him. On one occasion, as appears from a letter of Dryden's, the strictness with which Busby acted towards his son Charles put the poet's attachment to his old master to a hard trial.

† The accusation occurs in the pasquinade entitled *The Medal of John Bayes*:

'At Cambridge first your scurrilous vein began,  
Where saucily you traduced a nobleman;  
Who, for that crime, rebuked you on the head;  
And you had been expelled had you not fled.'

The word 'nobleman' is obviously employed to make up measure, for

is contradicted by the fact, that he not only remained long enough in the University to take his degree, but lived there for three years beyond the usual term. It is certain, however, that he never became a Fellow of the College, and that, from whatever cause his antipathy may have proceeded, he always entertained feelings of aversion for Cambridge, which he did not hesitate to avow in the Prologues he wrote many years afterwards for delivery at Oxford.

In June, 1654, he was called home from the University by the death of his father. This event put his character to a severe test, at a period of life when the judgment is generally overruled by the passions; and his conduct at this crisis exhibited early proofs of that discretion by which his after-life was regulated.

The whole annual value of the little estate at Blakesley was sixty pounds per annum. Two-thirds of this devolved upon him as the eldest son, the remainder falling to his mother, with reversion to him on her death. He determined at once upon the course which, under these circumstances, it was most prudent for him to pursue; and after having arranged his mother's affairs, he returned to the University, where he remained for three years longer. His income of forty pounds a year, estimated to be equal to at least one hundred and twenty pounds of the money of the present day, would have been sufficient for all his personal necessities, had he been disposed to consult his immediate pleasure, instead of looking with forethought to the future. But he preferred the scholastic self-denial, which enabled him to lay the secure foundations of a career of honourable labour.

During this period he appears to have devoted himself closely to study; and having read Polybius when he was only

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we are informed in a note, that at the universities noblemen's sons are called noblemen; so that the offence, after all, becomes reduced to a quarrel between two young men, in which the original transgressor appears to have violated the discipline of the college much less flagrantly than his opponent.

ten years of age,\* and, as he has himself told us,† being always passionately fond of history, we may conclude that he spent more time over his favourite Thucydides, Tacitus, and the rest of the Greek and Roman historians, than he gave up to the poets, ancient or modern. If he wrote any verses, none of them have been preserved. But it is not probable, to use the expression of one of his biographers, that he ‘sacrificed to the Muses,’ while he was at Cambridge. The poetical faculty was slowly developed in him, and was more indebted to cultivation than to impulse. He was nearly thirty years of age before he published the poem on the death of Cromwell; and even after he had obtained the stimulus of applause, his early productions followed each other at rather long intervals.

From the sobriety of temperament exhibited in his choice of a collegiate life, when he was perfectly free to select any other, it may be concluded that he was not easily enslaved by the temptations which young men of three or four and twenty usually find it difficult to resist. The cloisters, however, afford little security against the influence of the universal passion, and in the year following his father’s death the student fell in love with his cousin, Madame Honor Driden, who was at that time about eighteen years of age. This lady was the daughter of his uncle, Sir John Driden, and sister to his cousin, John Driden, of Chesterton, with whom the poet remained on terms of the closest intimacy and affection to the end of his life. Honor Driden is said to have been a beauty; and as, according to the tradition, she somewhat haughtily rejected the poet’s suit, it may be presumed that she was not unconscious of her advantages of person and

\* ‘I had read Polybius in English, with the pleasure of a boy, before I was ten years of age; and yet, even then, had some dark notions of the prudence with which he conducted his design, particularly in making me know, and almost see, the places where such and such actions were performed.’—*Character of Polybius.* 1692.

† ‘For my own part, who must confess it to my shame, that I never read anything but for pleasure, history has always been the most delightful entertainment of my life’—*Life of Plutarch.* 1683.

position—for she was, also, an heiress. The opportunities out of which this unpropitious attachment may be supposed to have grown up arose, no doubt, from the intercourse of the cousins at Canons-Ashby during some of the Cambridge vacations. It seems that Madame Honor liked the young collegian well enough as a cousin, for the only evidence we have of his devotion survives in a letter he wrote to her in acknowledgment of a silver inkstand with which she presented him. The letter itself is less remarkable as an expression of real feeling, than as a specimen of that brocaded style of writing which the metaphysical poets had brought into fashion; and might have been written by any man of gallantry who, without having his heart in the slightest degree involved in the matter, desired to pour out a heap of complimentary tropes at the feet of a handsome woman. After indulging in a variety of fantastical figures, this famous epistle runs on as follows. But to make the passage clear it should be observed, that the inkstand was accompanied by a parcel of wax and paper, and an ‘incomparable’ letter.

‘ By all that’s good (and you, madame, are a great part of my oath), it hath put mee so farre beside myselfe, that I have scarce patience to write prose, and my pen is stealing into verse every time I kisse your letter. I am sure the poor paper smarts for my idolatry: which by wearing it continually next my brest, will at last be burned and martyred in those flames of adoration which it hath kindled in mee. But I forget, madame, what rarityes your letter came fraught with, besides words. You are such a deity that commands worship by provideing the sacrifice. You are pleased, madame, to force me to write by sending me materialls, and compel me to my greatest happinesse. Yet, though I highly value your magnificent presente, pardon me, if I must tell the world they are imperfect emblems of your beauty; for the white and red of wax and paper are but shadowes of that vermillion and snow in your lips and forehead; and the silver of the inkhorn, if it presume to vie in whitenesse with your purer skinne, must confess it selfe blacker than the liquor it contains.’

The letter winds up with a few lines of verse, in which the prevailing extravagance, in the way of hunting verbal conceits

to the last extremity, is very successfully imitated. It is probably true of all poets, that they begin by imitation, the first impulse of that impressionable nature out of which, in the end, all great poetry is produced.

A passion that could find leisure to dress itself in such ornate phrases was not likely to leave any permanent traces behind; and it seems accordingly to have passed away as lightly as it came. Upon the lady, perhaps, it made a deeper impression. It is said that she repented of her refusal when her lover became distinguished; and there is no doubt that she was very proud of his letter, which she carefully preserved.\* They often met afterwards at Chesterton, where Madame Honor kept house for her brother;† and if Dryden had retained any painful memories of her disdain, we should probably have had some hint of them in his poems. But no allusion to the lady appears anywhere in his works, unless we are to believe that the name of Honoria, in the comedy of the *Rival Ladies*, was intended as a tribute to her. When that play was written, however, Dryden was on the eve of marriage, so that if he really had Madame Honor in his thoughts, there were no longer any regrets associated with the past. There is, indeed, reason to surmise that she did not retain a very strong hold on his regard, for in the letters of his which have been preserved, containing numerous references to her

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\* She was no less careful, as she advanced in life, to mystify her friends about the date of this precious love-letter, obliterating the two latter figures of the year, 'lest,' says Malone, 'the date should too nearly discover her age.'

† In the latter years of his life, Dryden was a frequent visitor at Chesterton, where, according to a tradition in the family, he inscribed the first lines of his translation of *Virgil* with a diamond, on a pane of glass. Mr. John Driden, Madame Honor's brother, at that period, after 1690, represented Huntingdon in parliament, and on his visits to London maintained the most affectionate intercourse with the poet. The last we hear of him is in the winter of 1699-70, when he was lodging at the house of Erasmus Dryden, who afterwards succeeded to the baronetcy, and who then kept a grocer's shop in King-street, Westminster.

brother, her name does not occur once.\* She survived the poet many years, and died unmarried.†

\* Amongst the letters preserved at Canons-Ashby, there are two from Madame Honor to her father. They contain no reference to the poet, but are interesting as specimens of the lady's correspondence, and as illustrations of the domestic manners of the period. It may be inferred from a comparison of the kindnesses the writer acknowledges to have received from her father, with the parental frugality alluded to by her sister in the letter which follows, that the beauty was the favourite daughter.

Honoured Father,

Feb. 15th.

I should bee most unworthy of your affection, should I not endeavor the utmost of my power to answer it by my constant obedience to your comands. Sr it is a high satisfaction to mee to hear your liking the pudings which was a requitall enought for the most covetous mind; for your Noble present in the reseat of so good orings and lemons I know not what to say, only beg of you to exsept my humble thankes, my brother and sister desier the like, for what thay received from you, this with thers and my humble duty to you

I remaine

These  
for her highly honoured  
father Sr John Driden

your dutifull Daughter  
HONOUR DRIDEN

Most Honoured

Sr I should bee most unworthy to have so kind a father as your selfe, if I should neglect the least opertunity, wherein I may present my duty to you though I have very litell else to writ. Pray Sr be plesed to buy my brother Richard a cage, and if you thinke convenient to send to the gentleman that gives him the things to take, however I beseech you to pardon me for remembryng you of it; I also want some things my selfe, but am almost ashamed to writ for them, knowing how many other things you have to buy; but if you will be plesed to bestow them on me, they are gorget of holland, or what is the newest fashion, and 2 ells of allamode for a scarfe; my brothers and sister are all well, they present their humble duty to you, this beeseeching you to excuse thes unpolished lines from her that is

Your most dutifull  
This  
and obedient Daughter  
For her highly Honour'd Father  
Sr John Driden at his lodgings  
at m<sup>r</sup> Hood his house  
in Chancery lane

HON DRIDEN

The letter referred to from her sister Ann, afterwards married to Mr. Pigott, suggests a point of some interest, and is here inserted on that account. In the postscript, Madam Ann begs of her father, on behalf of herself and her sister *Frances*, to let Mr. Conceit come down to Canons-Ashby in the summer. Who was Mr. Conceit? Could he have been her cousin, the young poet? The conjecture is in some

Some time in 1657, after a seven years' residence at Cambridge, Dryden went up to London. He entered life under

measure supported by the omission of the name of her sister Honor, who may, probably, have desired his company in reality more than either of them, but, for obvious womanly reasons, did not choose to join in the request. The soubriquet by which Madam Ann designates him is significant.

Honoured Father

I will not presume to trouble you with a longe letter of comple-  
ment and duty haueing too put you in minde of a petition I made to  
you which is trouble enough of it selfe. You were pleased to promise me  
a side saddle and furniture; if to my good fortune you have hitherto  
beene frugall I hope to my happinesse you will now bee liberall and  
therebeby ingage her humble gratitudo & acknowledgments whose de-  
sires are to approve her selfe

Deare Father  
Your most obedient Daughter  
ANN DRIDEN.

My sister Frances and myselfe humbly begs of you to let Mr. Conseat  
come downe this sumer—my brother Bevill presents his duty to you.

For her highly Honoured Father Sr John  
Driden at his lodging at M<sup>rs</sup> Hoods  
house in Chancery lane this present

The orthography and punctuation of these letters are strictly copied  
from the originals.

† Malone says she died after 1707. This is not exact. Nicholls, in his *History of Northamptonshire*, tells us that she was living in 1710. She was buried at St. Chads, Shrewsbury. To Sir Henry Dryden, who has aided my inquiries by instituting a search into the register of burials at St. Chads, I am indebted for all the additional information now likely to be procured respecting this lady. Her name does not appear in the register; but upon an old table of benefactions in the church there is the following inscription, accompanied by the armorial bearings of the Dryden family:—

‘ Mad. Honr. Dryden, of the parish of St. Mary, spinster, by her last will did give to the poore of this Parish Forty pounds, to bee put out at interest by the Churchwardens of the Parish, and the interest yearly to bee given by them to the poore of this Paris for ever. Dec. 5th, 1715. This money and a year's interest was paid by the executors of Mad. Dryden.’

It is difficult to determine whether this date is the date of the will, or of the payment of the bequest with the first year's interest. The latter conjecture is the more probable; in which case, it would fix the date of Madam Honor Dryden's decease in December, 1714. A search has also been made into the register of St. Mary's, the parish in which she is above stated to have resided, but without success.

circumstances which at once fixed his party and his position. His friends were in the Puritan interest, and the collateral branches of his family were wealthy and influential. His paternal uncle, Sir John Driden, had displayed his presbyterian zeal in the desecration of the church of Canons-Ashby; his father had been a justice of the peace under Cromwell, and is supposed to have acted as a committee-man, an office whose special function consisted in detecting and bringing to punishment all persons suspected of favouring the Stuarts; and his kinsman, Sir Gilbert Pickering, related to him both on his mother's and his father's side, was one of the most rigid puritans of the time, a person of great weight and influence, a fierce sequestrator, a member of the council of the Protector, chamberlain of the household, and high steward of Westminster. Sir Gilbert was a person of so stormy a temper, that he was commonly called the 'fiery Pickering'; but he never suffered his fanatical fury to interfere with his interests. At Whitehall he was the pliant and accommodating courtier, reserving the whole force of his violence for the malignants, whom he persecuted with uncompromising bitterness.

Such were the auspices under which Dryden commenced his career in London. His resources were inadequate to enable him to indulge in the expensive habits of the circle to which his first experiences of the metropolis introduced him; and he availed himself accordingly of the protection his powerful kinsman extended to him. Sir Gilbert Pickering enjoyed the close confidence of Cromwell; was a member of the Protector's House of Lords, as it was called; and, independently of his private fortune, was in the receipt of a large income from several lucrative appointments. In what capacity Dryden was employed by him does not appear. Shadwell says that he was his clerk.\* The probability is, that he acted

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\* 'The next step of advancement you began,  
Was being clerk to Noll's lord chamberlain,  
A sequestrator and committee-man.'

*Medal of John Bayes.*

Malone draws from these lines the inference that the poet became a sequestrator and committee-man, but they hardly bear out that con-

as Sir Gilbert's secretary, and that it was in the discharge of the multifarious occupations in which he thus became engaged, he obtained that insight into the character and genius of Cromwell which he afterwards displayed in the *Heroic Stanzas* on the death of the Protector.

The term of Dryden's connexion with the party he had espoused, or rather with which he was allied by natural ties and early associations, did not last long. The party itself was dissolved by the death of Cromwell. Sir Gilbert Pickering had one virtue amongst a thousand crimes of cruelty and venality: he was faithful to his principles, was one of those who assisted in the proclamation of Richard Cromwell, and sat in the Lords to the last. His influence with the Earl of Sandwich, to whose sister he was married, fortunately enabled him to escape the penal consequences of his fidelity; and, under an act of indemnity, which merely disqualifies him from holding any office under the crown, he was permitted to retire to his estate, where he died in 1668.

Dryden was no less true to the cause, so long as there was a cause to be maintained. But when the Restoration terminated for ever the prospects of his party, sweeping away in its train the leading spirits of the time, he went over at once to the king. It was a moment of universal excitement. The heart of the country throbbed loudly for a change. The heads of the Puritan party had themselves recognised the necessity of re-establishing the monarchy, and there was not a shred of hope left to justify resistance to a settlement which had become essential to the repose and security of the kingdom. If Dryden, whose antecedents can hardly be said to have committed him very deeply, is to be censured for falling in with the general movement, what is to be thought of Waller, and the crowd of Cromwell's personal friends, who absolutely conducted Charles II. to the throne? With Dryden, it was more a renunciation of family than of political bonds. The Pickerings never forgave him for embracing the new

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struction. It was the lord chamberlain, not his clerk, who was sequestrator and committee-man.

order of things ; and from the hour when he published the *Astraea Redux*, a poem on the happy restoration and return of his most sacred Majesty, he appears to have been left to his own resources, until the distinction he won by his writings drew more powerful friends around him.

From the grand and solemn chambers of Sir Gilbert Pickering's mansion to an obscure lodging in the house of Herringman, a bookseller in the New Exchange, was the transition that marked the new phase in the poet's career. He had now commenced author by profession, or, according to the lampoons afterwards launched against him, he had become a literary drudge, fulfilling all the miserable and inglorious conditions familiar to the world in poor Goldsmith's lines on the bookseller's hack. The statement, however, is improbable.\* Dryden was at least independent of such extreme necessity; nor is it likely that if he had written prefaces and dedications, as alleged, for Herringman's books, they would have entirely escaped the researches of his biographers. During the ensuing two years his published productions were certainly too scanty to have occupied the whole of his time ; consisting of a poem on the Coronation, a panegyric addressed to the Lord Chancellor, and a Satire on the Dutch. But as it was at this time, immediately after the Restoration, he planned the tragedy of the *Duke of Guise*, and wrote his first acted play, *The Wild Gallant*, there could not have been much leisure for the servile work ascribed to him. The fact, also, of his having been elected a member of the Royal

\* It rests solely on the doggrel already quoted :—

‘ He turned a journeyman to a bookseller ;  
Writ prefaces to books for meat and drink,  
And as he paid, he would both write and think.’

*Medal of John Bayes.*

Shadwell also says that he lived in a lodging with a window no bigger than a pocket looking-glass, and dined at a threepenny ordinary, ‘ enough to starve a vacation tailor.’ But we should know what value to place upon such scurribilities from the unscrupulousness with which they were vented on both sides. It would be just as reasonable to believe that Dryden was an atheist because Shadwell said so, or that Shadwell was an Irishman because Dryden represented him as one in *Mac Flecknoe*.

Society in November 1662, proves that he must have obtained thus early a personal position incompatible with an obscure situation in the employment of a bookseller.

At the house of Herringman, he made the acquaintance of Sir Robert Howard, son of the first Earl of Berkshire, a gentleman who flirted with the Muses, and was just then bringing out a collection of poems. Dryden evidently read the poems before they were published, which was in April, 1660, as his name appears attached to some complimentary lines prefixed to the volume.\* Their intercourse soon ripened into intimacy, and whatever advantages Dryden may have derived from his connexion with Sir Robert, there can be no doubt that Sir Robert was infinitely more indebted to him for the notice and distinction his friendship drew upon him in the literary world, and which no merit of his own could ever have procured. At the time when this intimacy was formed, Sir Robert Howard had not acquired the unenviable notoriety which, with other circumstances, may have contributed to the subsequent suspension of their intercourse. For several years, however, their friendship was maintained in the most cordial spirit on both sides, Dryden visiting Howard's family at their seat of Charlton, in Wiltshire, and assisting Howard in the composition of the play of the *Indian Queen*. This intimacy led to a very unexpected result, an attachment between the young poet and Lady Elizabeth Howard, the sister of Sir Robert, which soon afterwards ended in their marriage. A satire, ascribed to Lord Somers, implies that the marriage took place 'with circumstances,' as Dr. Johnson observes, 'not very honourable to either party.' But there is no evidence whatever in support of this imputation, which may be unhesitatingly dismissed amongst the many gross attacks made upon the character of Dryden during a life of political and literary controversy, by party malice and the jealousy of rivals.

Mr. Malone, unsuccessful in his efforts to ascertain the date of Dryden's marriage, conjectures that it must have occurred in

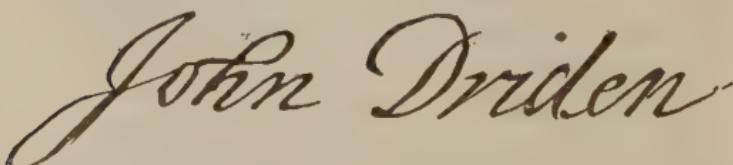
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\* See i. 126.

or before 1665,\* or during the interval between May 1665 and Christmas 1666,† when the theatres were shut up in consequence of the plague, and Dryden was residing principally at Charlton. All doubt on the subject, however, is set at rest by the subsequent discovery of the registry of the marriage, which took place, not at Charlton, but in London, at St. Swithin's, on the 1st of December, 1663. It appears that the marriage was performed by licence. The entry of the licence, which is dated 'ultimo Novembris, 1663,' is in the office of the Vicar-general of the Archbishop of Canterbury. It would be vain now to inquire why the licence was obtained only the day before the marriage, or why the marriage took place in the parish of St. Swithin's, to which neither of the parties belonged, Dryden being described as a parishioner of St. Clement Danes, of about the age of thirty (he was then thirty-two), and the Lady Elizabeth as a resident of St. Martin's in the Fields. The entry itself is so curious, and on one point so important, that I subjoin an exact copy of it, which I owe to the zealous offices of Mr. Charles Beville Dryden:—

Ultimo Novembris 1663

Juratus Hen : Smyth Jun :	Which day appeared personally John Driden of St. Clem <sup>t</sup> . Danes in the County of Midd Esq <sup>r</sup> aged about 30 <sup>ty</sup> yeeres and a Batchelor and alledged that hee intendeth to marry with Dame Elizabeth Howard of St. Martin in the Fields in the County aforesaid aged about 25 yeeres with the consent of her Father Thomas Earle of Berke not knowing nor believing any impediment to hinder the intended marriage of the truth of the prmisses he made faith and prayed Licence for them to bee married in the parish church of St. Swithins London
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\* *Miscellaneous Prose Works*, i. 46.

† *Ib.* i. 58.

It will be observed, as a remarkable circumstance connected with this entry, that in the signature of the poet, of which the above is an accurate fac-simile, the old orthography is preserved, although he had abandoned it so far back as the year 1650, as appears from the lines prefixed to *Hoddesdon's Divine Epigrams*, which bear the signature, 'John Dryden.'\* Perhaps he may have thought it necessary to adopt the pre-

\* The *Lachrymæ Musarum*, containing the Elegy on Lord Hastings, appeared the year before, with, no doubt, the same signature. Not a great many years have elapsed since an autograph of still earlier date was to have been seen, but of which no copy has been preserved. A house at Chiswick, known as the Manor House, in the possession of Gabriel Goodman, Dean of Westminster, used to be resorted to in time of sickness, and at other seasons when the dean and chapter thought proper, by the master of the Westminster school and his pupils. There was a clause in Goodman's lease binding him to erect buildings for the accommodation of the prebendaries, the master, usher, and forty boys; and the establishment, thus prepared for their reception, was frequently resorted to by Busby and his scholars. 'A few years ago,' says Lysons (second edition, 1811), 'when this house was the tenure of Robert Berry, Esq., the names of the celebrated Earl of Halifax, John Dryden, and many others of Busby's pupils, were to be seen on the walls.'—*Environs of London*, vol. 2, part 1.

The name on the wall has been long since swept away; but I am enabled, by the indefatigable researches of Mr. Charles Beville Dryden, to determine, as far as such evidence can be relied upon, the probability that even at this early period the poet had adopted the altered orthography. It appears that a tradition has been preserved in Westminster School, that when Dryden was a scholar there he had cut his name with a penknife on a form; and Mr. Charles Dryden recently visited the school for the purpose of ascertaining whether any memorial of that kind was in existence. His inquiries were successful. He discovered an old form on which was cut in straight upright letters the name I DRYDEN. Of course it is impossible to ascertain whether these letters were really cut by the poet's hand; but as there is no very obvious reason for attaching suspicion to it, the likelihood is in favour of the genuineness of the boyish inscription. If so, it is curious enough that, while he was yet at school, Dryden should have spelt his name differently from the rest of the family. In the Register of Trinity College, and in the University Register, the name is spelt Driden. The next record of the name is in the order at Cambridge, 1652, putting him out of commons for a fortnight; and the earliest autograph known to exist is the signature to the letter to Madame Honor, written in 1655. In both these instances the spelling is Dryden. It may not be out of place to observe here, that the last member of the family who preserved the old orthography was Mr. John Driden, of Chesterton.

vailing usage of the family on this occasion, as a matter of legal formality.\*

The entry in the office of the Vicar-general is important, as furnishing conclusive evidence on a point hitherto involved in doubt and obscurity. It has been generally supposed that the lady's family disapproved of this union, and discountenanced it. The disparity of circumstances, rather than of rank (for Dryden's connexions were amongst the gentry of the country), favoured this supposition; but it is clear, from the statement made in the application for the licence, that the marriage had the assent of the Earl of Berkshire. We know, from other evidence, that Dryden was afterwards a frequent visitor at Charlton (where he wrote the letter to Sir Robert Howard prefixed to the *Annus Mirabilis* in 1666); and it may be gathered from a passage in one of his dedications to the Earl of Rochester, in which he alludes to some property he possessed in Wiltshire,† that the Earl of Berkshire made a settlement upon Lady Elizabeth at the time of her marriage. Mr Malone, who sifted all the evidence he could procure bearing upon the settlement, concludes that it was worth about £60 a year; so that at this period Dryden was in the receipt of a private income of about £100 a year, equal to £300 at the present value of money. In 1676 this income was augmented by about £20 a year (£60 at the present value), by the death of his mother. This was the whole annuity he derived from any certain source to the end of his life.‡

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\* The entry in the Marriage Register book of St. Swithin's (at that time called St. Swithin's, London, but now called St. Swithin's, London Stone), exhibits one of the many variances we find in the orthography. It is there spelt "Draydon," and the lady's name "Haward." This entry is in the same handwriting as all the rest of the entries, and appears to have been written by the clerk or vicar. The church of St. Swithin's was destroyed in the fire of 1666, but the registers were saved. Dryden may be presumed to have intended a special reference to the conflagration of this church, in the stanza 273 of the *Annus Mirabilis*.

† 'I shall be proud to hold my dependence on you in chief, as I do part of my small fortune in Wiltshire.'—*Dedication of Cleomenes*. 1692.

‡ In 1670 he was appointed Poet Laureate and Historiographer, with a salary of £200 a year. In 1685, on the accession of James II., his

The reopening of the theatres, immediately after the Restoration, offered the most tempting field to literary industry and ambition ; and Dryden was one of the first writers who availed themselves of the revival of the stage. In the very year of the Restoration, he planned and wrote the greater part, if not the whole, of a tragedy founded on the rebellion of the Duke of Guise, as related by Davila. He selected this subject as a means of ‘setting forth the rise of the late rebellion, and by exploding the villanies of it on the stage, to precaution posterity against the like error.’\* But his friends were of opinion that the piece was not written with sufficient art for representation, and it was laid aside, to be taken up many years afterwards in conjunction with Lee. He did not, however, relinquish his intention of trying his fortune in the theatre ; and in February, 1662-3, he produced his first play, a comedy, called *The Wild Gallant*. The piece was unfavourably received ; its failure, indeed, was so decisive, that

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salary as Poet Laureate was increased to £300 a year. In 1689 he was deprived of both his offices by the Revolution, and thrown back at the close of his life upon his private resources, amounting altogether, as above stated, to about £120 a year. Mr. Malone estimates his income from the theatre at £100 a year, from 1665 to 1670 (with the exception of an interval of about eighteen months when the play-houses were shut) ; making his total income during that period equal to about £600 a year at the present value. From 1670 to 1676 he estimates his income, in the same manner, as being equal to at least £1500 a year of our money ; and from 1676 to 1689, when he was deprived of his court appointments, at £1200 a year. But in this estimate Malone takes no account of the sums Dryden received for his prose writings and poems, including the Prologues and Epilogues, for which (as I have elsewhere explained) there was a regular tariff. If we add these sums to the amount, it will be seen that Dryden for a part of his life was in receipt of an income, which, although like all literary incomes, subject to fluctuation, was by no means inconsiderable. It appears that he received nearly £1400 for the translation of Virgil ; Spence, on the hearsay of Pope, says £1200. This is not much in comparison with the profits of Pope himself, who received upwards of £5300 for the translation of the Iliad, but in Dryden’s time it was a large sum. The rate at which Dryden seems to have been generally paid for his poetry was fifty guineas for about 1200 lines. In enumerating the sources of Dryden’s literary emoluments, I have alluded to the increase of his salary under James II. Relative to this matter, a new and curious fact will be found in a subsequent page.

\* *Vindication of the Duke of Guise.* 1683.

he might perhaps have abandoned the stage at the outset, had he not been encouraged by the patronage of the beautiful Barbara Villiers, then Lady Castlemaine, and afterwards Duchess of Cleaveland, who introduced *The Wild Gallant* at court, where it was presented before the king. He repaid the lady's protection by a tribute of verses,\* written in the usual strain of adulation, which his vindictive lampooners did not forget to remind him of several years afterwards.†

Dryden frankly admitted his failure, and discovered the cause of it in the boldness of beginning 'with a comedy, which is the most difficult part of dramatic poetry.' But this was not the sole cause. Like some actors whose natural vein is humour, but who are seduced by a false ambition to begin with tragedy, he had mistaken his powers. He was too good a critic, however, not to find out the direction in which the force of his genius really lay. Later and more elaborate experiments disclosed to him his unfitness for comedy, and if he persevered in writing such pieces, it was, as he honestly avowed, for the sake of gain, and at the manifest risk of his reputation. With a nature overflowing with geniality, he lacked that exuberance of the animal spirits which the comedies of the Restoration demanded; and with the finest wit,

\* See i. 142.

† 'Dryden, who one would have thought had more wit,  
The censure of every man did disdain,  
Pleading some pitiful lines he had writ  
In praise of the Countess of Castlemaine.'

*Session of the Poets.* 1670.

The lines are certainly not 'pitiful' in a poetical sense, but full of purpose and melody; whatever may be said of the taste that addressed such a panegyric to Lady Castlemaine. It should be remembered, however, that the 'beauties' of Whitehall were the divinities of the day, and that he who looked to obtain the patronage of the court found it indispensably necessary to propitiate their influence. There were few writers who, like Oldham, had the courage to despise the reigning corruption. The gravest men acquiesced in it, and bishops and prime ministers were found administering to the vanity and caprices of these pampered ladies. Dryden's sins in this way were very slight in comparison with the servility of others. The reader who desires to see the vice at the height of its rankness may be referred to Aphra Behn's famous Dedication to Nell Gwyn.

the acutest insight into character, and a force and variety of satire to this day unequalled, he was deficient in the effervescent humour, the rapid perception of foibles and externals, and the light and sprightly ridicule which enter so largely into every form of comedy.\* Hence, he who soared above all his contemporaries in other regions of poetry, was less successful as a painter of manners and absurdities, than 'hasty Shadwell,' and infinitely inferior in dexterity, grace, and vivacity, to 'easy Etherege.'

Profiting by his first experience, his next play, *The Rival Ladies*, was a tragi-comedy, the heroic part of which was written in rhyme. This mode of writing plays was not introduced by Dryden, but his example brought it into fashion. In the Dedication to the Earl of Orrery, (who had himself written plays in rhyme,) he defended the practice on the grounds of the many advantages rhyme has over blank verse. This singular position was modestly combated by Sir Robert Howard, in a Preface to a collection of his plays, published in the following year; upon which Dryden wrote his well-known *Essay on Dramatic Poetry*, maintaining the use of rhyme, and other equally untenable dogmas, at considerable length, and with consummate skill. Sir Robert Howard again appeared in the field with an answer, short, and much to the purpose; and was finally silenced by a triumphant defence of the Essay, as remarkable for its felicity and vigour, as for some striking errors of judgment. This rejoinder terminated

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\* In isolated passages Dryden hit off external traits in a few words, with a felicity that shows what he might have done in this way, had he cared to dwell on such points. We may look in vain through the comedies of the time for anything more perfect in its kind than the following picture of a beau:—

From one the sacred periwig he gained,  
Which wind ne'er blew, nor touch of hat profaned;  
Another's diving bow he did adore,  
*Which, with a shog, casts all the hair before;*  
*Till he with full decorum brings it back,*  
*And rises with a water-s spaniel shake.*

*Epilogue to the Man of Mode.*

What he wanted was the power, or inclination, to sustain this sort of characterization.

the discussion, but produced an estrangement between the writers.

The controversy extended, at intervals, over a period of nearly four years,\* which I have anticipated, for the sake of presenting at once a complete view of its course and close. It is a memorable incident in literary history, as having given birth to one of the first specimens of regular and elaborate criticism in our language; and as exhibiting the canons of art, set up at a period when there existed no higher authority than the crude discourses of Webb and Puttenham. Spenser is said to have written a treatise of this nature, but it is lost; and Sir Philip Sydney's *Defence of Poetry* may therefore be regarded as the earliest attempt of that kind, for although not published till 1595, it was certainly written before Webbe's *Discourse*, which was published in 1586, the year in which Sydney died. In 1589, Puttenham published his *Arte of English Poesie*; and in 1591, Sir John Harrington prefixed an Apology for Poetry to his translation of *The Orlando Furioso*; which was followed, in 1602, by Campion's *Arte of English Poesie*. Such were the principal, indeed the only, critical essays of any value or importance, that existed before Dryden's time; and of these, Webbe and Puttenham alone treated the subject upon a systematic and comprehensive plan.† But as English poetry in the sixteenth century was only struggling into form, restrained on the one

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\* The dedication of the *Rival Ladies* to the Earl of Orrery, containing the first espousal of the use of rhyme in plays, was published in 1664. Sir Robert Howard's Preface appeared in the following year. This was followed, towards the close of 1667, by the *Essay on Dramatic Poesy*, written in 1666, at Charlton, as Dryden states in a short address to the reader, ‘without the help of books or advice of friends.’ In the same year, Sir Robert published his answer, in an address prefixed to the *Duke of Lerma*; and in 1668, Dryden closed the controversy by his defence of the *Essay*, declaring that as he ‘was the last to take up arms, he would be the first to lay them down.’

† There were other scattered snatches of criticism, such as Davenant's Preface to *Gondibert*—perhaps the most ambitious; but they were fragments at best. Ben Jonson's *Discoveries* (1630) can alone be regarded as an exception. Phillips's Introduction to the *Theatrum Poetarum* did not appear till 1675.

hand by the examples of classical antiquity, from which scholars still drew the laws of composition, and drawn into fantastic innovations on the other, by the influence of the Italian school, the treatises that appeared under such circumstances were wholly inapplicable to the period of transition and activity that ensued upon the Restoration. A new element had been introduced into our poetry, as into our manners, by the importation of the tastes and habits of France; and it was the distinguishing glory of Dryden, not only to regulate and control its disturbing operation, but to fix the standard of English poetry, especially in the essentials of style, diction, and versification.

The use of rhyme was not now discussed for the first time. Campion had denounced it in 1602 as ‘a vulgar and unartificial custome,’ and was answered by Daniel, in his *Defence of Rhyme*, in 1603. But Dryden was the first writer who advocated, and attempted to vindicate upon critical grounds, the employment of rhyme in plays. The sum of his arguments may be briefly stated.

Objecting to the inversions introduced into blank verse, to give an heroic air to the dialogue, he says that the necessity of resorting to them sometimes is the only inconvenience of rhyme, and the only reason why rhyme can be considered unnatural. Such inversions, however, should be avoided altogether. By suffering the language to flow in the same easy order it would fall into in prose, by selecting usual and proper words, and by never putting words out of their places for the sake of forcing a rhyme, he maintains that rhyme ‘has all the advantages of prose, besides its own.’ His theory of rhyme thus leaves the structure of the lines as free as if they were the language of ordinary conversation, while they acquire from the return of the sound a charm unknown to prose. One of the advantages of rhyme is the help it affords to the memory. The last word in one line often recalls the whole couplet. In repartee, rhyme has a particular grace; ‘the sudden smartness of the answer, and the sweetness of the rhyme, set off the beauty of each other.’ But the principal

benefit he proposes, as resulting from the use of rhyme, is, that it prescribes bounds to the fancy, and by compelling the sense within certain limitations, prevents the poet from being carried away into that luxuriance and superfluity to which he is liable, from the great easiness of blank verse. The manner in which Dryden expresses this doctrine is as remarkable as the doctrine itself.

‘The great easiness of blank verse renders the poet too luxuriant; he is tempted to say many things which might better be omitted, or at least shut up in fewer words; but when the difficulty of artful rhyming is interposed, when the poet commonly confines his sense to his couplet, and must contrive that sense into such words that the rhyme shall naturally follow them, not they the rhyme; the fancy then gives leisure to the judgment to come in; which seeing so heavy a tax imposed, is ready to cut off all unnecessary expenses.’

He adds, that he is of opinion the scenes in which rhyme may be most advantageously employed are those of argumentation and discourse, on the result of which the doing, or not doing, some considerable action should depend.

This passage (which occurs in the dedication to Lord Orrery, the subject being afterwards expanded and illustrated in the *Essay*), although written at a period when he tells us ‘he was but in the rudiments of his poetry, without name or reputation in the world, having rather the ambition of a writer than the skill,’ furnishes a key to his whole system, not merely as developed in his plays, which are not always in accordance with his own laws, but in his great poems, where the words follow each other in the most natural and obvious sequence, and where all the grace, beauty, and music of rhymed verse are to be found in combination with the closest texture of reasoning.

Sir Robert Howard’s objections to the dramatic theory were such as might present themselves to any person submitting the question to the ordinary test of common sense. He held rhyme to be unnatural in dialogue intended to reflect the language of real life, simply because in real life people do

not talk in rhyme. It is true, people in real life do not utter blank verse; but if that argument be just, it must be admitted in still greater force against rhyme. The use of rhyme in repartee, ‘where a piece of verse is made up by one that knew not what the other meant to say,’ has the effect of destroying that suddenness in the reply which is an essential quality of repartee, and of giving it an appearance of premeditation, which makes it look ‘like a design of two, rather than the answer of one.’ The restraint which Dryden declared was exercised by rhyme over the excursions of the fancy, Sir Robert disposed of by a very rational remark—that he who wanted judgment in the liberty of his fancy would be tolerably sure to betray his defect in its confinement. Sir Robert, in short, ignored the use of rhyme in plays altogether (although he had practised it himself), considering it, in its highest perfection, as a language which it was impossible any person could speak *extempore*, and in its application to mean thoughts, as suffering degradation; so that, in neither use, its best or its worst, was it fit for the stage. His illustrations of the latter are conclusive; for nothing can be much more ludicrous than the instances he selects, such as ‘when a servant is called, and a door bid to be shut, in rhyme.’

Dryden afterwards saw occasion to modify and practically to retract the opinions he had thus early embraced, and long continued to act upon.\* His own mastery of rhyme, and the extraordinary ease with which he could mould it to his purpose, without permitting it to clog the expression or interrupt the melody of the versification, may have originally fascinated

\* The most signal evidence of his retraction of the doctrine he had so vigorously asserted throughout this controversy, is to be found in his *Lines to the Earl of Roscommon*, (1680). In other places, in prefaces and prologues, he withdrew his allegiance from rhyme; here he openly denounces it:

‘barbarous nations, and more barbarous times,  
Debased the majesty of verse to rhymes;  
Those rude at first: a kind of hobbling prose,  
That limped along, and tinkled in the close.’—i. 219.

and misled his judgment. Poets perhaps possess in a high degree that sensibility of feeling which leads men to think best of that which they can do best; and, from the samples Dryden has left us, there can be no doubt that, whatever excellence he might have attained in blank verse, his natural element, so to speak, was rhyme. It should not be forgotten, however, that the Essay in which he asserted his favourite dogma, contained that noble tribute to the genius of Shakespeare (whom he inaccurately describes as the inventor of blank verse) which Dr. Johnson selects as ‘a perpetual model of encomiastick criticism; exact without minuteness, and lofty without exaggeration;’ adding, ‘in a few lines is exhibited a character so extensive in its comprehension, and so curious in its limitation, that nothing can be added, diminished, or reformed.’\*

Before their intercourse was interrupted by literary differences, Dryden had joined Sir Robert Howard in a play called the *Indian Queen*, which was soon afterwards succeeded by the *Indian Emperor*, Dryden’s first heroic play. This piece was followed by the comedy of *Secret Love; or, The Maiden Queen*,—the plot of which was said to have been suggested by the king. Dryden had now acquired so much reputation as a dramatic writer, that the king’s company, under the management of Killigrew, anxious to secure and monopolize his services, entered into a contract with him, by which, in consideration of a share and a quarter in the theatre, the whole stock of which was divided into twelve shares and three quarters, he was to furnish them with three plays annually. This arrangement would have been productive of a fluctuating income of between three and four hundred a year to Dryden, had he kept his obligation with the players. But notwithstanding that he wrote rapidly, (although not with the perilous velocity of Shadwell,) he failed to fulfil his part of the agreement. Nor was this all: the king’s people

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\* Dryden’s character of Shakspeare has supplied the staple of nearly all the characters that have been since drawn of him, but more especially of the well-known panegyric by Johnson himself.

had further to complain, that he had gone over to the other house with the play of *OEdipus*, written in conjunction with Lee,—an act of injustice which they made the ground of a memorial to the lord chamberlain, wherein they set forth the great liberality with which they had treated him, and the wrong which, under circumstances of peculiar pressure, he had thus inflicted on them. The old theatre had at this time been burned down, and the new house built in Drury-lane; in which, as it now appears, Dryden was a sharer by subscription;\* so that, in lending the weight of his name to the rival theatre, he was injuring not only the interests of the players, but his own. That he did not keep his contract strictly can scarcely be imputed to him as a wilful neglect; the fact was, that he had undertaken more than he could perform, or than he ought to have performed, with a due regard to his fame. Even as it was, having produced five plays in about three years, the marks of hurry, and the excesses of a heated and overworked imagination, are too apparent.

In 1667 Dryden published the *Annus Mirabilis*, in which he first developed his powers of description. The form he selected was beset with difficulties; but instead of deterring him, they seem to have determined his choice. He considered the quatrain the most suitable vehicle for noble and stately numbers; for he had not yet sounded the depths of the couplet, which subsequent experience led him to adopt and adhere to. We have here, however, the dawn of the revolution he afterwards completely effected in English poetry—diction distinguished by strength, purity, and fitness, flowing versification, and the final abandonment, with a few exceptional excesses, of metaphysical obscurity and imagerial conceits.

This was a period of great activity in the theatres. The opposition of the two companies under Davenant and Killi-

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\* See *Prologues and Epilogues* in vol. iii., under which head all special details relating to Dryden's plays will be found.

grew made such demands on Dryden as to leave him little leisure for any other occupation. His industry, although it did not enable him to discharge his contract, was sufficiently energetic to supply during the next two or three years a rapid succession of plays. In the same year that he published the *Annus Mirabilis*, he produced the comedy of *Sir Martin Marall*, and an alteration of the *Tempest* in connexion with Davenant. These were followed by an *Evening's Love; or, the Mock Astrologer*, (in which he displayed his knowledge of astrology, to say nothing of his belief in it,) *Tyrannick Love*; and the *Conquest of Grenada*, in Two Parts.

That Dryden believed in astrology is attested by evidence more direct and conclusive than the intimacy with its secrets revealed in the play of the *Mock Astrologer*.\* He certainly resorted to the horoscope to ascertain the destinies of the members of his family. In a letter to one of his sons at Rome, he says, ‘Towards the latter end of this month, September, Charles will begin to recover his perfect health, according to his nativity, which, casting it myself, I am sure is true; and all things hitherto have happened accordingly to the very time I predicted them.’ This was written about 1697, so that he retained his faith in the stars to the end of his life. This superstition communicated its effects to his writings, where the planets, in the exercise of their supposed influence over human affairs, are frequently apostrophised. It is undoubtedly surprising that a mind so acute should be enslaved by doctrines so absurd; but it may be said of the greatest intellects in all ages, that they sanctioned opinions not less astonishing to us, in our advanced state of knowledge, than the delusions of astrology.

By the death of Sir William Davenant in 1668, the office of poet laureate became vacant. It happened that the situation of historiographer royal was lying vacant at the same time,

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\* Several of his predictions, and the wonderful manner in which they were fulfilled, will be found related in the appendix to the *Life of Congreve*. When Dryden died, it is said that the horoscope of his son Charles was found in his pocket-book.

James Howell, the last person who had held it, having died in 1666, and no successor having been appointed in the interval. Both offices were conferred upon Dryden, with an honourable recognition of his merits in the letters patent. Some of his biographers suppose that he was indebted for this distinction to Sheffield, then Earl of Mulgrave; Malone is inclined to refer it to the patronage of Sir Thomas, afterwards Lord Clifford;\* but it is more likely that he owed it exclusively to his own literary claims.† There were others to whose immediate influence at court it might be ascribed, with even greater plausibility than either Sheffield or Clifford, had Dryden been disposed to solicit their interest. That he did not, however, avail himself of the advantages which the countenance of great people threw open to him, is abundantly evinced in many passages scattered through his writings. The hyperbolical extravagance of some of his Dedications, justly reprobated by Johnson, cannot be fairly quoted in evidence against these emphatic disclaimers of personal subserviency. The Dedication, with its preposterous tropes and bombastic flattery, was as much a part of the manners of the day as the Chadreux periwig, or the laced steinkirk. It would be as reasonable to measure the morals of a writer in the reign of Charles II. by his costume as by his Dedications, since he obviously followed the fashion in both, without being in the slightest degree responsible for its absurdity. The greater his command over the artifices of rhetoric, the more likely he would be to excel in the language of compliment and eulogy; and if Dryden went beyond all his contemporaries in that respect, as

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\* In another place he ascribes it partly to Rochester.

† The language of the patent bears out this inference. The office is there stated to be given to him ‘in consideration of his many acceptable services theretofore done to his majesty, and from an observation of his learning and eminent abilities, and his great skill and elegant style both in prose and verse.’ In the patent to Davenant, the ‘consideration’ was ‘for service heretofore done, and *hereafter to be done*,’ which latter condition was omitted in Dryden’s case; nor does it appear that he ever did perform any services in his capacity as laureate, unless we are to accept his lines on the birth of a prince as an official tribute.

he unquestionably did, it was simply because he could not help going beyond them in everything.\* It is not then in his Dedications that we shall trace the true character of his relations with great people, but in his published writings, and, still more, in his personal conduct. There is a remarkable passage in his vindication of the Duke of Guise bearing directly on this point. He is speaking of the favour that had been shown him by the Duke and Duchess of Monmouth, of which it was his own fault that he did not avail himself more largely.

‘If I had not greater, the fault was never in their want of goodness to me, but in my own backwardness to ask, which has always, and, I believe, will ever keep me from rising in the world. Let this be enough, with reasonable men, to clear me from the imputation of an ungrateful man, with which my enemies have most unjustly taxed me. If I am a mercenary scribbler, the Lords Commissioners of the Treasury best know:† I am sure they have found me no impertinent solicitor; for I knew myself I deserved little, and, therefore, have never desired much. I return that slander, with just disdain, on my accusers: it is for men who have ill consciences to suspect others; I am resolved to stand or fall with my God, my king, and country; never to trouble myself for any railing aspersions, which I have not deserved; and to leave it as a portion to my children, that they had a father who durst do his duty, and was neither covetous nor mercenary.’

When Dryden wrote this he was fifty-two years of age, had enjoyed the laurel (to which, though vacant in 1668, he was not

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\* Dr. Johnson has overcharged his condemnation of Dryden’s dedications. It was not that Dryden wrote more parasitically than others, but that he wrote better. Encomium became conspicuous in his hands, from the attraction with which he invested it.

† This allusion to the Lords of the Treasury is significant in more senses than one. He does not merely mean to imply that he received no favours from the government, but, as will presently be seen, that he could not even obtain the payment of his salary. I have examined the Secret Service Expenses of Charles II. and James II., from 1679 to 1688 (printed by the Camden Society), and although I find the names of Killigrew and others, especially the king’s mistresses, as large recipients of the royal bounty, the name of Dryden occurs only once, and then, as I shall have occasion to mention, for the payment of an old arrear of his salary.

appointed till 1700, receiving, however, the two years' arrears of pay,) thirteen years, was in the zenith of his reputation, and had passed through that period of his life, when, if ever there could have been any foundation for the charge of venality or sycophancy, it must have been discovered. Ten years later we find him reiterating the same sentiments, and asserting the same manly independence, in a letter to Dennis

'Hitherto I have no reason to complain that men of either party shun my company. I have never been an impudent beggar at the doors of noblemen: my visits have, indeed, been too rare to be unacceptable; and but just enough to testify my gratitude for their bounty, which I have frequently received, but always unasked, as themselves will witness.\*'

He never asked a favour, although favours, according to the usage of patronage in those days, were conferred upon him, which it was not only not considered derogatory to accept, but honourable to deserve. On the contrary, his life, for which he appeals in this letter to the testimony of those who knew him best, was 'blameless and inoffensive.' Nor was this the virtue of indifference or a languid temperament, which suffers opportunities to pass away unreaped, and then takes credit to itself for being superior to them. A man who occupied so prominent a position, and who wielded so great a power, could not fail to have had temptations thrown in his way, which it required no common firmness to resist. His biographers have collected few facts to enlighten us on this subject. They seem to have taken it for granted, that he who had renounced the Commonwealth, and changed his religion, was hardly entitled to a vindication, and they have either left his personal integrity an open question, or touched upon it with timidity or distrust. It is certain, nevertheless, that Dryden, when the political storm lulled, received offers of place and emolument, by way of peace offering, from his old adversaries, and that he refused them; and that when his sons, and other friends, urged him to dedicate his *Virgil* to King William (at a time too, when he was involved in worse distresses than

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\* About 1693-4.

had ever befallen him at any former period,) he could not be persuaded to follow their counsels, although Jacob Tonson used all his influence to prevail upon him, and even tried to entrap him into the Dedication by preparing the book for the purpose, and having the figure of Eneas in the plates drawn like King William, with a hooked nose. There was reason to believe that this Dedication would have reconciled all differences between Dryden and the court, and brought him a large pecuniary reward. He thus alludes to it in a letter to his sons at Rome.

‘*My Virgil* succeeds in the world beyond its desert or my expectation. You know, the profits might have been more, but neither my conscience nor my honour would suffer me to accept them; but I can never repent of my constancy, since I am thoroughly persuaded of the justice of the cause for which I suffer.’\*

If he compromised his taste in the season of prosperity by addressing his patrons in the language of extravagant adulation, it must, at least, be allowed to his honour, that he inflexibly maintained his principles under the last pressure of adversity.

Davenant enjoys the credit of having introduced what was called heroic plays. Dryden established them. They were called heroic because they were written in a language elevated above nature, and exhibited passion in a state of maniacal ecstasy. These pieces had now held possession of the stage some nine or ten years, when the Duke of Buckingham undertook to expose their absurdities in *The Rehearsal*, produced in the winter of 1671. It is said that he was assisted in the design by Butler, Sprat, Clifford, and others. This is probable enough, from the structure of the ridicule, which resembles a piece of mosaic work. Davenant was originally meant for the hero, but his recent death† seems to have led to

\* 1697.

† This consideration, however, did not prevent the authors of the *Rehearsal* from carrying out a part of their travestie by a coarse personal joke: the actor who represented the character wearing a patch on his nose, which could not be mistaken as applying to Davenant.

the substitution of Dryden, who was on other accounts a more conspicuous mark for this sort of satire. Not satisfied with parodying some of the most familiar passages in Dryden's plays, the Duke of Buckingham took considerable pains in teaching Lacy, who performed *Bayes*, to mimic the author in his manner of reciting them. Dryden was notoriously a bad reader, and had a hesitating and tedious delivery, which, skilfully imitated in lines of surpassing fury and extravagance, must have produced an irresistible effect upon the audience. The humour was enhanced by the dress, gesticulations, and by-play of the actor, which presented a close imitation of his original. Dryden bore this unwarrantable attack in silence; being fully conscious, no doubt, that so far as it reflected upon his plays it was unanswerable. But he afterwards showed that he had a keen sense of the obligations the duke had laid him under on this occasion, and he discharged them in full, with compound interest, in his *Absalom and Achitophel*.

The town was highly amused, although its taste was not in the least degree corrected, by *The Rehearsal*. Heroic plays continued to flourish as long as Dryden continued to write them; a drudgery which his necessities imposed upon him for several years afterwards. In the ensuing year he produced the comedies of *Marriage à la Mode* and *The Assignation*, which were followed in 1673 by the tragedy of *Amboyna*. That *The Rehearsal* exercised any influence over him in determining the form of this tragedy is not very likely; yet it is worth a passing note, that in this instance he departed from the models he had himself set up, and instead of indulging in rhyme and deep-mouthed speeches, a considerable part of it is written in prose, and the rest in blank verse. This circumstance may probably be accounted for by the haste in which it was written for a temporary purpose, the nature of the subject, and the low grade of the characters. The object of the piece was to inflame the popular hatred of the Dutch, with whom we were then at war; the topics admitted of no grandeur, even of the grandiloquent kind, in the treatment; the personages were not only common place, but contemporaneous,

which doubly prohibited the employment of a highly coloured style; and the piece was planned and completed in a month.

Milton died on the 8th of November, 1674. Immediately after his death Dryden published the *State of Innocence, and Fall of Man*, (originally intended to have been called *The Fall of Angels and of Man in Innocence*), which he designates an opera. It was founded avowedly on the *Paradise Lost*, at that time little known, and even less esteemed. In this extraordinary attempt to melt down an Epic poem of the most ambitious scope and pretensions into a drama, the elements and materials of which were hopelessly irreconcilable with its form, the use of rhyme was pushed to the last extremity, for it would be difficult to imagine a more monstrous incongruity than this perversion of the blank verse of Milton. The truth was, that Dryden had not yet discerned the greatness of the work which he was thus desecrating. He believed that he had found in Milton only the rough ore, and seems to have thought with his panegyrist Lee, that in turning it into a sort of heroic opera he was really putting it through a refining process.\* Yet if the anecdotes related by Richardson in his notes on Milton may be relied upon, Dryden declared, when he first read *Paradise Lost*: ‘This man cuts us all out, and the ancients too;’ and many years afterwards, when he had entered upon the translation of *Virgil*, speaking with

\* Lee, in his address to Dryden on this occasion, treated the conversion of *Paradise Lost* into rhyme in a way which might be mistaken for a touch of sinister ridicule, if the character of his own writings and his known attachment to Dryden did not afford us sufficient assurance of his sincerity. The comparison drawn in the following lines is in itself so ludicrous, that Rochester or Buckingham could hardly have produced a more perfect specimen of mock panegyric:

‘ He first beheld the beauteous rustic maid,  
And to a place of strength the prize conveyed;  
You took her thence, to court the virgin brought,  
Dressed her with gems, new-weaved her hard-spun thought,  
And softest language, sweetest manners taught.’

The notion of bringing a rustic maid to court, and decking her with gems, &c., expresses with most satisfactory covert severity the violation of good taste and sound judgment Dryden had committed in the case of *Paradise Lost*.

enthusiasm of Milton's work, he said, that he 'would not have done his *Virgil* in rhyme if he had to begin it again.' Upon the whole, Dennis's statement that Dryden confessed to him, twenty years after he had written the *State of Innocence*, that 'at that time he knew not half the extent of Milton's excellence,' is best entitled to credit as being most reconcilable with probability. It supplies the only excuse, or palliation, of which so strange a poetical heresy admits; and the worst that need be said of it is, that Dryden committed a signal error of judgment upon an imperfect sense of the great merits of his original.\* But the publication of the opera was not unattended with advantages to Milton's fame. It attracted curiosity to his poem. The public thought that a work which their foremost living poet condescended to employ as a foundation must have some claims upon attention, and the popularity thus bespoke for it by Dryden was subsequently confirmed by the critique of Addison.

The moment had now arrived when Dryden was about to renounce the use of rhyme in plays, which he did with as much strenuousness as he had formerly displayed in its defence. The frankness with which he acknowledged an error was as characteristic of his open nature as the boldness with which he vindicated it in the first instance. Whatever he thought it right or just to do, he did thoroughly and heartily. He never had recourse to half measures to cover his retreat. His recantations were not softened or compromised by apologetic sophistries. He was not ashamed of admitting a mistake, but eager to make full amends for it—his eagerness sometimes even carrying him too far on the other side. To this im-

\* In the preface, it is true, after acknowledging his obligations to *Paradise Lost*, he pays a high tribute to that poem, which he speaks of as being 'undoubtedly one of the greatest, most noble, and sublime poems which either this age or nation has produced.' But this is the language of courtesy, not of earnest conviction. Had he been truly impressed with its nobleness and sublimity, he would have held it too sacred for so profane an experiment. Aubrey says that he asked Milton's permission beforehand, and that Milton answered, 'Ay, he may tag my verses if he will.' The very permission was a reproof in itself.

pulsive temperament, this impetuous candour, (for which he has never got the entire credit he deserves,) may be traced those contradictions of opinion on questions of criticism that are scattered over his prose writings—contradictions, however, which always conduct us to new trains of thought, and even in their fallacies are entitled to respect.

In the prologue to the tragedy of *Aurungzebe*, produced in 1675, he announced his abandonment of the old form, and followed it up practically in 1678 by the play of *All for Love*, expressly modelled on the example of Shakspeare. In the same year he brought out the comedy of *Mr. Limberham; or, the Kind Keeper*; and in the ensuing year an alteration of *Troilus and Cressida*, and the tragedy of *Oedipus*, written jointly with Lee, and played by the duke's company.\* In conformity with the usage he had himself introduced, and which he resorted to as knights used to resort to the lists to maintain the colours of their mistresses against all comers, he prefixed to the *Troilus and Cressida* an essay on the grounds of criticism in tragedy, as in the preface to the *State of Innocence* he had published an apology for heroic poetry and poetical licence. Such were the shapes in which he instructed his age in the art of poetry; and if we find some assertions in them from which we are compelled to dissent, we still, nevertheless, recur to them with profit and delight. The comprehensiveness of their views, the richness and integrity of their language, and the perspicuity with which they treat the minutest points of criticism, must always render them attractive to the English reader.

Dryden may be regarded at this period as being, if not at

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\* Malone is mistaken in saying that Dryden's contract with the King's Company was at this time dissolved. He furnishes evidence of the contrary himself, in the memorial of the management to the Lord Chamberlain, in which they complain of the production of *Oedipus* at the other house as a breach of agreement. Malone sometimes forgets his own facts in a very tantalizing way. His capacity of digesting and reducing them to order, and making them illustrate and bear upon each other in the proper places, is conspicuously disproportionate to his industry in collecting them.

the summit of his fame, the most conspicuous writer of the time. He was not less famous in prose than in poetry. His plays—whatever we may think of them—were the main support of the king's house. A new heroic play, a mixed drama, from Dryden, attracted throngs of people of all classes. The court, the king's mistresses, the wits, the loungers of Fop's Alley, the scourers and brawlers of the pit, and the vizard masks of the eighteen-penny gallery, crowded into the theatre on these occasions. His dedications, prefaces, and dissertations were read with avidity, and every new canon he enunciated was discussed in the taverns and booksellers' shops as eagerly as a bulletin from Holland, or the last money vote of the house of commons. The influence he wielded was, as it were, authenticated by the laurel, which assigned to him a position as commanding as his talents. But this eminence was neither quietly achieved, nor easily sustained. It was won by hard fighting, and, like some fort which is the key to an empire, had to be kept against a perpetual siege. Envy, detraction, and jealousy, are the ordinary monsters, the griffins and dragons, that beset the path to literary distinction. In Dryden's day they assumed the most hideous and formidable shapes. It was an age of patrons and parasites. It was not to the public that literary men looked for encouragement and support, but to the Mecænas of the hour; and the career of literature consequently degenerated into an unworthy contest for the favours of the great. Invectives and slander were unscrupulously employed to damage the public reputation, or embitter the domestic repose of a rival. No engines of scandal or falsehood were considered too base for this internecine warfare; and the contagion spread so virulently, that even lords and courtiers sometimes became parties to the discreditable cabals of which they were themselves the objects. The pursuit of truth, the restraints of good breeding and good taste, and the dignity of letters, were sacrificed to mean animosities, and the low strife of coffee-house factions. In such a state of society it was not very surprising that personal outrage should follow close upon the conflicts of a depraved press, and

that men of education, who did not hesitate to calumniate their contemporaries in the language of the stews, should descend at last to acts of dastardly violence. There were instances enough of this sort to brand with special infamy the reign of Charles II. The Duke of Buckingham is said to have employed Colonel Blood to assassinate the Duke of Ormond;\* Sir John Coventry was set upon by some of Monmouth's followers, for making an allusion, in his place in parliament, to the king's extravagance, and escaped from their hands with a slit nose; Sir Charles Sedley hired a bravo to beat Kynaston, the actor, in St. James's Park, for the offence of wearing a laced coat fashioned upon his style; and the Earl of Rochester conspired with the Duchess of Portsmouth to have Dryden waylaid on his way home at night, for an allusion to them in a poem called *An Essay on Satire*, of which he was suspected to be the author.† ‘If he falls on me at the blunt, which is his very good weapon in wit,’ writes Rochester, in one of his letters, ‘I will forgive him, if you please; and leave the repartee to Black Will with a cudgel.’ He was as good as his threat; and upon the bare suspicion of the authorship of an anonymous satire, Dryden was accordingly waylaid by some ruffians in Rose-alley, on his way from Will’s coffee-house to his house in Gerard-street.‡

There are some outrages which attach a distinguishing stigma to the society under which they occur, while others,

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\* He was openly accused of the intended crime by the Earl of Ossory, in the presence of the king, and shrank from the charge behind his majesty's chair.

† The question of the authorship of this poem is examined in the introduction to it, i. 207.

‡ Anthony Wood states the fact in his diary, under the date of the 17th Dec. 1679, adding, that Dryden was soundly cudgelled; and that it was believed the reason of it was his having reflected upon some persons in his *Absalom and Achitophel*. This is, of course, an evident mistake, as *Absalom and Achitophel* was not published till two years afterwards. Such a mistake would be of little importance in a retrospective narrative, but occurring in a diary which professes to have been written from day to day, recording incidents as they happened, it is calculated to shake very materially the reader's confidence in the integrity of the writer.

even of a more desperate character, are common to all communities. We can find some palliation in the sudden excitement and heat of blood for the murder of Mr. Scroop, who was stabbed in the theatre, in Dorset Garden, by Sir Thomas Armstrong; and even the assassination of Mr. Thynne is somewhat relieved of its atrocity, if we can suppose that a real passion entered into the motive. These are cases which might have taken place in any age or country; but the hired bludgeon is the emblem of universal depravity. There was evidently no apprehension of degradation arising from the expression of public opinion, at the commission of such cowardly offences. Public opinion pandered to all the vices; but this was the worst of all. It might be forgiven for its indulgence of other forms of licentiousness, had it preserved the last virtue of manliness, and resented the attempt to transplant into the English soil the crimes of the assassin. There was no such evidence, however, of a lingering respect for the national character. The midnight assault only supplied a new jest for the Rose, and exploded in a pasquinade. The last brawl was lashed, perhaps, in a satirical prologue, which made the audience laugh to their hearts' content, and sent away the bullies of the pit at the top of their animal spirits, to commit fresh outrages with increased impunity.

Rochester's conduct to Dryden on this memorable occasion, appears to have been perfectly consistent with his character. He was a man of a singularly inconstant nature; as capricious in his likings, his jealousies and his resentments, as the most fabulous of coquets. He seemed to take a sort of malignant pleasure in raising up poets only to strike them down again, as children build houses of cards for the same rational purpose. Otway, Crowne, and Settle, in turn enjoyed his patronage, and were crushed under his inexplicable hostility. Dryden could not expect to fare any better than the rest; and having dedicated *Marriage à la Mode* to him, and acknowledged his patronage in a panegyric, the natural sequence of events brought round the invariable results. The vengeance of Rochester was aggravated by Dryden's attachment for

Sheffield, Earl of Mulgrave, who had posted him as a coward for refusing to fight him; and as Mulgrave was praised in the poem which contained the depreciating lines on Rochester, the measure of the poet's offence was complete. Dryden does not appear to have retaliated in any way upon his pusillanimous assailant. The grave soon afterwards closed their accounts; and Dryden, who never spared his living antagonists, was not capable of making war upon the dead.

Soon after this incident, Dryden appeared for the first time as a translator, in a version of the *Epistles of Ovid*, introduced by one of those remarkable prefaces in which he exhausted the question of art immediately under consideration. Lord Roscommon's *Essay on Translated Verse* had just broken new ground on the subject, and prepared the public for the opinions of a critic, to whose judgment they had now become accustomed to look up with attention and respect. Dividing the modes of translation which had previously been adopted into three heads:—Metaphrase, or the literal rendering of the original; Paraphrase, or translation with latitude of amplification; and Imitation, in which the translator uses an extensive liberty with the sense and expression of his author, ‘running divisions on the groundwork as he pleases,’—Dryden rejected them all, and regarding metaphrase and imitation as the two extremes to be avoided, struck a happy mean between them, by which the original becomes as it were transfused into the language of the translator. In this Essay special reference is made to the translations of Waller, Denham, and Cowley; but, strangely enough, Sandys, who had a direct claim to notice on this occasion, and Fairfax, of whose versification Dryden elsewhere speaks as Waller's model, are both passed over in silence.

These translations were followed by the tragi-comedy of the *Spanish Fryar*, which appeared in 1681; the same year in which Dryden brought out his great poem of *Absalom and Achitophel*, a production which marks an epoch, not only in his own life, but in English poetry.

The political agitation which convulsed the kingdom at

this time spread over the entire realm of literature. The press teemed with lampoons and scurrilous personalities. Every man who could write, or who had an object to serve, turned pamphleteer. Poetry itself cast aside its singing robes, and rushed into the heat of the battle. Even the theatre was converted into an arena for the contests of party; and the drama, hitherto the satirist of foibles and vices, became a vehicle of popular feelings, asserting Protestant doctrines at one house, in furious opposition to prerogative and Papacy at the other. The writers for the stage, and the players themselves, were swept into the torrent; and Shadwell acquired as much notoriety under the appellation of the True Blue Poet, as Joe Haines afterwards earned by his apostasy and subsequent recantation, which he had the indecency to celebrate before the audience in a penitential sheet, with a torch in his hand. Dryden occupied too conspicuous a position to suffer him to remain neutral. His relations with the court as Poet Laureate, and his connexion with the king's house, may have helped to determine the side he espoused; towards which he was also drawn by his constitutional predilections. *Absalom and Achitophel*, an elaborate defence of the monarch against the whigs, and the only surviving specimen of the numerous tracts and satires that sprang out of the struggle between the crown and the parliament, was undertaken at the express desire of the king.\* If it failed of its immediate object, which was to turn the tide of opinion against Shaftesbury, it undoubtedly produced a powerful effect on the public mind. No work was probably ever read with greater avidity. It passed through five editions within a year.

In the *Spanish Fryar* Dryden had just before attacked the Roman-catholic religion. He described that piece in his dedication as a Protestant play addressed to a Protestant patron; and it could scarcely have passed finished out of his hands when he sat down to the composition of *Absalom and*

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\* This fact is stated on the authority of Tate, who was likely to be well informed.

*Achitophel*, which Malone conjectures to have occupied about nine months. The Exclusion Bill was the great question at issue between the king and the whigs; and the Roman-catholic religion, if not actually the religion of the sovereign, was notoriously identified with his party. It was impossible to defend the king, therefore, without seeming to support popery. Such was the dilemma in which Dryden placed himself by his sudden transition from the *Spanish Fryar*, in which the bitterest scorn and detestation were flung upon the Jesuits, to the *Absalom and Achitophel*, in which the royal obstinacy was sustained in its resistance to the Protestant appeals of the people. Conscious of the damaging arguments that might be brought against the poem, if the source from whence it proceeded were avowed, he published it anonymously. But the art, the variety, the exquisite acrimony of the satire, could not be mistaken. The authorship was detected at once, and afforded a triumphant pretext for the small wits and jealous rivals, who had long been condemned to obscurity under the shadow of his renown, to load him with opprobrium. Samuel Pordage, a low dramatic writer, and Elkanah Settle, the city poet and showman, who had been set up against him by Rochester, were amongst the foremost and most rancorous of his assailants. His literary antecedents were diligently raked up; his eulogy on Cromwell, and the transfer of his allegiance to the Stuarts, afforded abundant scope for malignant animadversion; he was in turn accused of servility, licentiousness, and atheism; and even his private life, to those domestic recesses which are usually considered sacred from public inquisition, was explored for the materials of calumny. He took no notice of these personal scurrilities, beyond a contemptuous allusion to them in the preface to the *Medal*, written immediately afterwards, also on the suggestion of the king. Elkanah Settle, however, returned to the attack in an answer to the *Medal*; and this time with so much effect, that Dryden, stung at last into retaliation, coupled him with his friend Shadwell, and covered them both with ignominy in the second part of *Absalom and Achitophel*,

under the characters of Og and Doeg. So far as Settle was concerned, this chastisement was sufficient; but Shadwell was the more incorrigible offender. He had libelled Dryden in a thousand shapes, and exhibited a persevering enmity that demanded a larger measure of punishment. With what power and severity that punishment was inflicted may be seen in the *Mac Flecknoe*, published in October, 1682. In some respects this is one of the most remarkable of Dryden's poems. It was the first satire of its kind in our language, the progenitor of the *Dunciad*, and of a long train of similar invectives, which, for the most part, have passed into oblivion. To invest a mere personal topic with universal interest, and to inspire fleeting circumstances with the fascinations of permanent wit, is the work of the highest order of genius; and this work was never before, or since, performed with such extraordinary success. Dryden himself considered *Mac Flecknoe* one of his best productions. 'If anything of mine is good,' he said to Dean Lockier, "'tis *Mac Flecknoe*; and I value myself the more upon it, because it is the first piece of ridicule written in heroics.' Lockier ventured to remind him of Boileau's *Lutrin*, and Tassoni's *Seechia Rabita*. 'True,' replied Dryden, 'I had forgotten them.\* These pieces, however, are so dissimilar in other respects as to leave the originality of design and treatment of *Mac Flecknoe* unimpeached.'

In the following month (November, 1682) Dryden produced his tragedy of the *Duke of Guise*, written in conjunction with Lee. Notwithstanding the elaborate disclaimers he put forth in his vindication of it, this play must be included with the *Absalom and Achitophel*, as forming part of the labours he dedicated at this time to the cause of the king. The parallel between the Leaguers of France and the Covenanters of England was obvious, and the evident purpose of the tragedy was to serve the interests of the Duke of York. In these two years, of 1681 and 1682, therefore,

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\* Spence, p. 60.

we find him opposing the Roman Catholics in the *Spanish Fryar*, and supporting the crown against the Protestant party in the First and Second Parts of *Absalom and Achitophel*, (the latter of which was brought out a week before the tragedy,) the *Medal*, and the *Duke of Guise*. Had he not himself furnished, immediately afterwards, the most conclusive proof that in taking his stand in the political controversy on the royal side, he had not thereby compromised the religious opinions previously avowed in the *Spanish Fryar*, these circumstances would supply a strong case of inconsistency against him. But the evidence is too clear on that point to admit of a doubt. His Protestantism was as yet above suspicion. In advocating the king's prerogative, rebuking the violence and intrigues of the whigs, and laying bare the hazards Monmouth was incurring by lending himself to the designs of Shaftesbury, (which subsequent events fatally justified,) he limited himself strictly to the political elements of the subject. A careful examination of the *Absalom and Achitophel*, with the light thus thrown upon it, will confirm this description of its aim and tendency. So far from betraying any tenderness towards the Church of Rome, there are more passages than one in which he insinuates his objections to her tenets. Wherever the Duke of York is spoken of as the legitimate successor to the crown, the whole question is made to rest exclusively on the maintenance of order, peace, and established authority—the objects for which the poem uniformly pleads throughout.

The Second Part of *Absalom and Achitophel* appeared in that busy month of November, 1682; and in a few days was followed by the *Religio Laici*. Here was, at once, the answer to all aspersions on the score of religion. We may securely adopt Dr. Johnson's opinion of this poem. He says it is almost the only work of Dryden's which can be considered as a *voluntary effusion*. And, without stopping to inquire too nicely into the grounds of this judgment, it is valuable, as showing that Dr. Johnson believed Dryden to have been perfectly sincere in the profession of principles he now put forth.

Whatever a man writes voluntarily, free from any pressure of circumstances, and especially, as in this instance, at some risk to his own interests, may be reasonably presumed to express his feelings and convictions with integrity. In this point of view,—and there is no other from which it can be so fairly examined, or so severely tested,—the *Religio Laici* must be regarded as the declaration of faith of a thinking and conscientious Protestant. It cannot be denied, however, that the impression it makes, as the work of a mind which — to use his own emphatic words — had reasoned itself into truth, is not favourable to the stability of those mental operations which afterwards conducted him to opposite results.

Dryden had now ceased to write for the stage. Works of another kind afforded him more profitable employment; and, in the ensuing two years, he published a *Life of Plutarch*, and a volume of *Miscellanies*, chiefly consisting of translations from *Virgil*, *Horace*, and *Theocritus*. By the command of his majesty, he also translated Maimbourg's *History of the League*, which Dr. Johnson supposes he was engaged to undertake, for the purpose of promoting Popery; but it was much more likely that the real object in view was to carry out the comparison already indicated in the *Duke of Guise*, between the conduct of the Covenanters and the French Leaguers, by way of setting an historical example and warning before the country.

The use which his majesty seems to have made of Dryden was repaid with the meanness which characterized all the money transactions of the Stuarts. While the most lavish expenditure was incurred to pamper the king's mistresses, not one shilling was bestowed on the writer who had defended the monarch against a host of powerful enemies, and who carried nothing but wounds and suffering out of the conflict. He could not even get his salary as laureate, which was suffered to fall into heavy arrears; compelling him, to the great disgrace of the court, to sue as a mendicant for the paltry stipend which it was his right to demand. And all

this time the Duchess of Portsmouth had a pension of £12,000 a year; and, in one year, received no less than the incredible sum of £136,668 10*s.* secret expenses! And the record which bears official testimony to the payment of this money, has but one entry under the name of Dryden, which is for the discharge of an old arrear of a quarter's salary! The only sum which can be referred to the hands of the king, as having been bestowed upon the poet, was the hundred broad pieces which his majesty is “said” to have given to him for having written the *Medal* at his suggestion; and this petty gratuity is apocryphal, for it is wholly unauthenticated by evidence of any kind. We do not even know the source from whence the solitary anecdote of his majesty's munificence is derived.

The variety and quantity of the labour upon which Dryden was forced to embark during this period, sufficiently testify the necessity to which he was reduced by the neglect of the court. And, in a letter to the Earl of Rochester,\* published by Malone, and conjectured by him to have been written in August, 1683, but probably not written till the spring of the following year, he lays his case very plainly before the government. The statements in that letter show that he was not only suffering from ill health, the consequence of pecuniary anxiety, but that he was in imminent danger of arrest for debt. He pleads the services he had rendered the king, by refusing advantages which had been offered to him by the common enemy, and neglecting beneficial studies, for his majesty's service. He even speaks of having run some hazard of his life by his zeal in the king's cause; and, in the language of a man whose spirit was broken down by distress, he begs for some small

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\* This Earl of Rochester must not be confounded with the more notorious John Wilmot, Earl of Rochester, already spoken of, who died in July, 1680. The nobleman to whom this letter was addressed was Laurence Hyde, second son of Lord Clarendon, who was made First Lord Commissioner of the Treasury in 1679, and continued in office till September, 1684.

employment, in the customs or the excise, that would render his condition easy. ‘Be pleased,’ he says, ‘to look on me with an eye of compassion.’ And then he adds, somewhat re-asserting the dignity of his claims as a man of letters, ‘Tis enough for one age to have neglected Mr. Cowley, and starved Mr. Butler.’ At this very time he was engaged upon a work by his majesty’s command, and his majesty was not considerate enough of his circumstances to supply him with the means of proceeding with it. ‘I am going to write somewhat,’ he concludes, ‘by his majesty’s command,\* and cannot stir into the country for my health and studies, till I secure my family from want.’ Such was the humiliating petition which the greatest poet of the age was forced, in the last extremity, to submit to the gracious consideration of the government, in whose cause he had sacrificed his health, and neglected more secure and profitable occupation.

Mr. Malone adds, that this application was successful; and refers, for the sequel, to a vague acknowledgment of Lord Rochester’s kindness to Dryden in the dedication of *Cleomenes*, published some eight or nine years afterwards. I am fortunately enabled to supply a more exact and satisfactory account of the result, by the evidence of a curious and important document in the possession of Mr. Charles Beville Dryden, to whom I am indebted for permission to transcribe it. This document is an Exchequer Warrant, dated 6th May, 1684, bearing the autograph of Lord Rochester, countersigned by Stephen Fox, authorizing the payment to Dryden of a certain portion of an old arrear of his salary, together with a further payment now for the first time brought to light, which, as I shall have occasion to show, materially affects the speculations that have hitherto connected Dryden’s change of religion with the addition made to his pension by James II. The corner of the upper part of the warrant has been mutilated, or torn

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\* The work was no doubt the *History of the League*, as supposed by Malone, which fixes the date of this melancholy letter with tolerable certainty.

off, by which a few words have been destroyed at the commencement. The mutilation, fortunately, does not affect the sense.

## COPY.

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of the sume of Fifty pounds for one quarter of the said Annuity or Pençon due at Midsummer 1680 And by Vertue of his Ma<sup>ts</sup> Lres of Privy Seale directing an additionall Annuity of One hundred pounds to him the said John Dryden to draw one or more orders for payment of the sume of Twenty five Pounds for one Quarter of the said Annuity due at Lady day 1680 And let both the said sumes making the sume of Seaventy Five Pounds be satisfyed out of any his Ma<sup>ts</sup> Treasure now or hereafter being and remaining in the Receipt of Excheqr not appropriated to particular uses For w<sup>ch</sup> this shal be your Warrant

Whitehall Treasury Chambers May the 6<sup>th</sup> 1684

To our very Loving friend S <sup>r</sup> Robert howard Kn <sup>t</sup> Auditor of the Receipt of his Ma <sup>ts</sup> Excheqr.	Rochester
Int <sup>r</sup> . in officio Auditor	J Ernle <sup>c</sup>
Recpt scc-y Dni Regis	Ed Dering
M <sup>r</sup> Dryen 75 <sup>l</sup>	Ste:ffox
	Int <sup>r</sup> in Officio Clci Pell &c <sup>a</sup>

By this document we discover that upwards of four year of Dryden's annuity, as poet-laureate, were due on the 6th May, 1684; and that, in answer to his painful appeal to Lord Rochester, a quarter's salary, which had fallen due at Midsummer, 1680, was ordered to be paid to him. The request for a small place in the customs or excise received no attention; but, in lieu of a provision of that nature (which would, at least, have possessed the advantage of security), letters of privy seal were issued, settling upon him an additional annuity of one hundred pounds a year, which is directed to take effect from the quarter ending at Lady-day, 1680. To what extent he derived any benefit from the increase of his pension cannot now probably be traced; but the existence of this warrant indisputably establishes the fact, that, in the last year of the reign of Charles II., before Dryden had embraced the Roman-

catholic religion, this additional annuity was conferred on him. Charles II. died on the 5th February following; and it might have been expected that his successor, who was so largely indebted to Dryden's services during the most troubled period of his life, would have at once conferred some special mark of favour upon him. But the only notice James took of him, was to curtail the perquisites of his office, by directing, in the new patent rendered necessary by the demise of the crown, that the annual butt of sack should be discontinued.\* For a whole year, Dryden remained upon the original salary of the laureateship; and it was not till the 4th March, 1685-6, that the increase which had been granted to him by the former sovereign was recognised by James, and added, by letters patent, to his pension; the express grounds for the grant being 'the many good and acceptable services done to our late deceased brother King Charles the Second, as also to us done and performed,' &c. It is manifest from this statement that the additional annuity granted by James was not a new grant, but the resumption of an annuity granted by his predecessor. The former grant, it will be observed, was bestowed by his Majesty's letters under the privy seal, and did not form a part of the salary of the poet laureate under his patent, (an arrangement which would have required a new patent to have been issued for the purpose,) so that upon the accession of the new sovereign, when Dryden's patent came to be renewed, the salary was continued at the old amount and the augmentation, which had not been officially annexed to it, lapsed in common with all other personal gratuities conferred by the late king. A year passed before the claim was recognised, and the manner in which it was then conceded supplies, I think, incontestable evidence that it was a continuation of the grant of Charles. The letters patent by which James conferred the additional £100 a year, passed the great seal on the 4th March, 1685-6, setting forth that this

\* This fact, which escaped all Dryden's biographers, is stated by Mr. Macaulay, who discovered the authority for it in the Treasury Letter Book of 1685.

annuity was to be paid quarterly, and that the first payment was to commence *from the 25th March preceding.*\* This retrospective clause covered the whole of the arrears from the death of Charles II., when the former gratuity lapsed, and as clearly as any act of one government can be shown to carry out the intentions of its predecessor, connects the second annuity with the first, confirming and securing it in a more authentic form. If such was the purpose of James, it may be asked why he did not at once renew the gratuity, instead of suffering it to remain in abeyance a whole year? But that question is easily answered. His meanness and parsimony† led him to curtail every petty item of expenditure that he could find a pretext for dispensing with, and his indisposition to show any particular favour to Dryden may be inferred from his withdrawal of the annual butt of sack. There was another consideration, also, that justified delay and hesitation. The list of Charles II.'s pensions was a formidable document. If James consented to renew a single special grant of the former reign, he knew that it would expose him to a clamour of applications. His reluctance, therefore, to touch that catalogue of corrupt and costly benevolences was not unreasonable; and it may be assumed that he yielded at last in the case of Dryden only to the repeated intercessions of powerful friends at court.

I have dwelt upon these circumstances because they contribute materially to remove the suspicion hitherto attached to this pension, and which would now seem to be unwarranted by the facts. Nearly all Dryden's biographers have been influenced, more or less, by that suspicion. Even Dr. Johnson, who is unwilling to pronounce judgment on a question which no human evidence can satisfactorily decide, and who is desirous to put the best construction on the motives by which Dryden was actuated in changing his religion, cannot help be-

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\* Malone, i. 190.

† 'From the day of his accession he set himself to make small economical reforms, such as bring on a government the reproach of meanness, without producing any perceptible relief to the finances.'—MACAULAY'S *Hist. Eng.*, ii. 198.

traying the doubt which the supposed connexion between the conversion and the pension had raised in his mind. His words are memorable :

‘ That conversion will always be suspected that apparently concurs with interest. He that never finds his error till it hinders his progress towards wealth or honour, will not be thought to love truth for herself.’\*

Mr. Macaulay, whose character of Dryden, distinguished by a spirit of invective as indiscriminate as it is severe, must inspire all dispassionate readers with deep regret, brings forward the charge with circumstantial minuteness.

‘ Finding that if he continued to call himself a protestant, his services would be overlooked, he declared himself a papist. The king’s parsimony instantly relaxed. Dryden was gratified with a pension of one hundred pounds a year, and was employed to defend his new religion both in prose and verse.’†

I have not been able to discover on what authority this statement is made: nor have I found the accusation exhibited in this shape anywhere else. According to the evidence of dates, the pension, instead of following the conversion, was antecedent to it. I do not know whether this will be considered to alter the case much. If we are still to believe that Dryden changed his religion for a pension, the morality of the transaction will not be mended by proving that he secured his pension before he avowed his change; but as it is desirable to be accurate in such matters, in order that others may be able to form an opinion as well as ourselves, the safer course is to state facts in the order of their occurrence. The pension was resumed in 1685-6, and the anonymous *Defence of the Duchess of York’s Paper*, in which Dryden for the first time espoused the doctrines of the Church of Rome, appeared late in 1686. The *Hind and Panther* was not published till the middle of 1687. The conversion, no doubt, followed close upon the pension—so close, that it was difficult to resist the reasoning which insisted upon tracing a connexion between them.

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\* *Life of Dryden.*

† *Hist. Eng.*, ii. 199.

The fact, however, disclosed by the exchequer warrant I have quoted, which shows that the pension in reality dated as far back as May, 1684, diminishes very sensibly the force of the imputation, if it do not prove it to be altogether groundless. If the pension had been granted to Dryden to purchase his services in defence of his new religion, he would scarcely have passed over two years without doing something towards acquitting himself of the obligation it imposed upon him ; nor would he have waited for the accession of James to avow an apostasy to the benefits of which Charles was so much better entitled.

To those who regard all changes of opinion with abhorrence, it would be idle to offer any argument in defence of that right of judgment which consistent Protestantism is bound to respect, even when it happens to be adversely exercised ; but they who are willing to extend to others the toleration they would think it very hard to be excluded from themselves, will discover some grace, and some claim to forbearance, in the sincerity of such changes. That Dryden was thoroughly sincere cannot be reasonably doubted. Mr. Macaulay calls him ‘an illustrious renegade.’ The term is opprobrious, and must have been wrung from a conviction that Dryden did not believe in the religion he embraced ; for Mr. Macaulay cannot be suspected of denying to Dryden the same liberty of opinion he has himself used so freely in judging of him. Upon this point, indeed, he is sufficiently explicit. He tells us plainly that Dryden had no religion at all :

‘ He knew little and cared little about religion. If any sentiment was deeply fixed in him, that sentiment was an aversion to priests of all persuasions, Levites, augurs, muftis, Roman-catholic divines, Presbyterian divines, divines of the Church of England.\*

This sentence will not come to much upon dissection. A man who believes in any one form of religion will be likely to regard with indifference the priests of all other forms ; and

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\* *Hist. Eng.*, ii. 199.

it would be quite possible to be an exemplary Christian and to hold in aversion the whole group of priests collected into this passage, which certainly does not embrace every denomination of Christianity. It is no great discredit to Dryden that he rejected the ministration of muftis, although we cannot say as much, with equal confidence, concerning the augurs. But that he knew little and cared little about religion, is an assertion to which his writings and his conduct furnish a conclusive answer. His theological works, which Mr. Macaulay describes as ‘abundantly proving that his knowledge both of the church which he quitted and of the church which he entered, was of the most superficial kind,’ have furnished a storehouse of texts for subsequent disputations between the two churches; and, as I shall have occasion to show in another place, are esteemed to this day by the heads of the church which he entered, who may be allowed to be the most competent judges on their own side of the question, as masterpieces of argument and research, displaying exact and varied learning, and exhausting every topic at issue in the great controversy. That the author of the calm and rational *Religio Laici* should have afterwards adopted the doctrines of the *Hind and Panther* may excite astonishment, but does not justify the accusation of scepticism or dishonesty.

His private life supplies that kind of testimony to the sincerity of his change which, of all evidence, is least open to distrust. He brought up his sons strictly in the religion he embraced, and sent them to Rome to confirm them in it. His wife, also, entered the Roman-catholic church. A man who was uneasy in his new profession, or who, from a consciousness of unworthy motives, was anxious to vindicate his integrity, must have betrayed such feelings in his confidential correspondence. But Dryden’s letters are singularly free from allusions of that nature. There is not a trace of the struggle or discontent of the neophyte in them. The earnestness of his conviction had produced a tranquillity of soul which lifted him above the necessity of seeking ease in the

justification of his faith. Wherever he does touch upon matters of this kind, it is rather to deprecate discussion than to invite it; as when he says in a letter to Dennis—

‘When they cannot fasten upon our verses, they fall upon our morals, our principles of state and religion. For my principles of religion, I will not justifie those to you: I know yours are far different. For the same reason I shall say nothing of my principles of state. I believe you in yours follow the dictates of your reason, as I in mine do those of my conscience. If I thought myself in an error I would retract it. I am sure that I suffer for them; and Milton makes even the devil say, that no creature is in love with pain.’\*

The steadfastness with which he maintained his religion under the Protestant dynasty of William has been already shown; and the following passage, in a letter to his relation and intimate friend, Mrs. Stewart, written late in 1699, a short time before his death, contains a temperate and unaffected expression of faith which derives additional force from its being purely a private communication:

‘The court rather speaks kindly of me, than does anything for me, though they promise largely; and perhaps they think I will advance as they go backward, in which they will be much deceiv’d: for I cannot go an inch beyond my conscience and my honor. If they will consider me as a man who has done my best to improve the language, and especially the poetry, and will be content with my acquiescence under the present government, and forbearing satire on it, that I can promise, because I can perform it; but I can neither take the oaths, nor forsake my religion: because I know not what church to go to, if I leave the Catholique; they are all so divided amongst themselvles in matters of faith, necessary to salvation, and, yet all assuming the name of Protestants. May God be pleas’d to open your eyes, as he has open’d mine! Truth is but one; and they who have once heard of it can plead no excuse, if they do not embrace it. But these are things too serious for a trifling letter.’†

We have other proofs of his sincerity that are less pleasant to contemplate; for he appears to have carried into his private

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\* *Miscel. Works*, ii. 36.

† *Ib.* ii. 93.

transactions the principles of unity which he found in his new religion. If we may draw such an inference from one of his letters to Jacob Tonson, he was as exclusive in his tradespeople as in his faith. He desires Tonson to adjust his account with Pate, the well-known literary woollen-draper, to whom he was indebted for three yards of fine cloth, ‘because,’ he adds, ‘I am to deal with a draper who is of my own persuasion, and to whom I have promised my custom.’

The death of Charles II. was in every way unpropitious for Dryden. It stopped the payment of the additional salary which had been only recently bestowed upon him, and arrested the production of the opera of *Albion and Albanus*, which he had prepared as a tribute to the king and the Duke of York. The opera, however, was brought out a few months later with alterations adapting it to the new reign, when a fresh calamity awaited it in the rebellion of the Duke of Monmouth, which shut up the theatres. *The Threnodia Augustalis*, a Pindaric elegy on the death of the king, and the *Ode on Mrs. Anne Killigrew*, are the only poetical pieces that belong to this period. Dryden was otherwise employed. According to an entry in the Stationers’ books, made by Tonson, in April, 1686, it appears that he completed, by the king’s command, a translation of Varillas’ *History of Heresies*; but its publication was suppressed, in consequence of the credit of its author having been destroyed by the appearance of Burnet’s *Reflections*. Such, at least, is Burnet’s account of the withdrawal of a work which there is the evidence of the Stationers’ Register to show was undertaken and finished at the instance of the king. Dryden had not yet openly avowed his adhesion to Popery. But he prepared the way for it by entering the lists of controversy against Stillingfleet, who had published an answer to a paper written by the Duchess of York, in which she stated at large her reasons for changing her religion. Dryden’s defence of this royal manifesto is the weakest of all his prose writings. It is deficient in his usual closeness and perspicuity, and betrays an asperity

of temper rarely to be detected in his writings. Stillingfleet made an easy conquest of his anonymous opponent.

Having fleshed his lance in this masked encounter, he now openly took the field in his own person, as a convert to the Church of Rome. The *Hind and Panther*, the longest of all his poems, ‘an allegory,’ says Johnson, ‘intended to comprise and to decide the controversy between the Romanists and Protestants,’ announced his conversion to the world. Whatever was imperfect in his defence of the Duchess of York’s apostasy, was here made up in the vindication of his own; and the arguments that appeared so clumsy and awkward in prose, were wielded with consummate dexterity in his favourite heroics. Restored to his natural element, his power seemed to return reanimated by a new enthusiasm; and in no former work did he exhibit so triumphantly that mastery of numbers and that art of reasoning in verse which are amongst his distinguishing attributes. The form, no less than the subject, of the poem yielded tempting materials for ridicule; and the occasion was seized upon to revive some old grudges against the laureate. An attack which had been made by Martin Clifford several years before on Dryden’s plays, was now brought to light and published; and to give more point and piquancy to the *brochure*, Tom Brown added some abusive *Reflections on the Hind and Panther*. But the principal assault came from Charles Montague, afterwards Earl of Halifax, and Prior, at that time a student at Cambridge. They were both young men, and friends of Dryden’s; and if Dean Lockier’s authority may be credited, Dryden was affected to tears by their unkindness, exclaiming, ‘For two young fellows that I have always been very civil to, to use an old man in so cruel a manner!’ Dr. Johnson doubts the truth of this anecdote; which, however improbable it may seem, Lockier affirms upon his own knowledge. Although we may not be able to detect in the *Country and City Mouse* a sufficient provocation to call up the emotion it is thus said to have occasioned (for, with much skill and acuteness of sarcasm here and there, it is dull and over-

charged as a whole), yet the personal feelings wounded by its publication may account for the pain it inflicted. Dryden had been accustomed to the roughest warfare; but his assailants hitherto were literary rivals and political adversaries, whose motives were patent to the public. He had been used to satirical appellations, and had himself railed against others in the same fashion. It was no novelty to him to be called ‘Mr. Bayes’ (a title originally intended for Davenant), and he had borne with indifference the more contemptuous *soubriquet* of Poet Squab. The authors of the *Country and City Mouse*, however, were of a different order from the rest of his critics. They were young men, with whom he had been on terms of courtesy; they were coming in with a new generation of writers when he was old, and entitled from their hands to the respect due to a literary patriarch; and moreover they were volunteers in these ungracious hostilities. In such circumstances we may discover the grounds of that sensibility which worse usage from coarser pens had failed to awaken.

The first *Ode on St. Cecilia’s Day* appeared in the same year as the *Hind and Panther*, and was followed in 1688 by the *Britannia Redivivus*. During this happy interval, Dryden was reposing upon his augmented pension, preparing, doubtless, for future achievements, but producing little. The birth of a prince, destined, as the poet believed, to preserve and transmit the dynasty of the Stuarts, was hailed with exultation by the Roman Catholics; and Dryden contributed his share of prophetic congratulations. But the event upon which he and they relied for the establishment of Popish ascendancy, precipitated its downfall; and the Revolution which immediately followed, placing the Prince of Orange on the throne, destroyed for ever all those expectations which Dryden had depicted with such superstitious fervour in his last court poem. As it was impossible that he who had committed himself so irretrievably to Popery could be retained in the service of a sovereign whose special claim to the suffrages of the nation was his Protestantism, Dryden was deprived of

his offices of laureate and historiographer in August, 1689 ; with the further vexation of seeing them bestowed upon his old antagonist, the true-blue Protestant poet Shadwell. If this appointment may be supposed to have mortified him, it was not without some countervailing compensation ; for the exchange of Dryden for Shadwell, however consistent with political expediency, did not bring much literary credit to the new government. As was said by a celebrated orator on another occasion, Dryden was a greater man in his obscure house in Gerard-street, than Shadwell with the laurel at Whitehall.

The deprivation of his pension cast him once more upon hard work for his support ; and his remaining years were devoted to a variety of labours—prodigious in quantity, considering the period of life at which they were undertaken, but still more remarkable for the freshness and vigour they exhibited. He seemed to rebound with more than the elasticity of youth, from a calamity which would have paralyzed the energies of other men.

Necessity forced him back upon the stage, which he had relinquished for the preceding seven years. The tragedy of *Don Sebastian*, and the comedy of *Amphytrion*, were both produced in 1690, followed in the ensuing year by the opera of *King Arthur*, and in 1692 by the tragedy of *Cleomenes*, the last act of which he confided to his friend Southerne, in consequence of an illness which prevented him from finishing it himself. All these pieces met with complete success. That his return to the stage was a matter of exigency, and not of choice, is frankly avowed in his preface to *Don Sebastian*,\* where he also confesses to the curious fact, that long

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\* The stage, however, had fallen so low in its exchequer at this time, that it yielded him but a trifling recompence for his labours. In his preface to *Cleomenes* he says, ‘The subsistence which I had from the former government is lost ; and the reward I have from the stage is so little, that it is not worth my labour.’ The whole sum he could have acquired by a play is estimated by Malone at little more than a hun-

disuse of dramatic writing had led him into the error of exceeding the ‘usual compass of a play,’ and crowding the piece with characters and incidents to the inconvenient lengthening of the main action. We gather from this preface that the play occupied four hours, during which the audience manifested a patient endurance which he feels himself bound to thank them for. Excellent advice, too, he gives to all dramatic writers on the virtue of brevity, in this preface : ‘ It is an ill ambition,’ he says, ‘ of us poets to please an audience with more than they can bear ; and supposing that we wrote as well, as vainly we imagine ourselves to write, yet we ought to consider that no man can bear to be long tickled.’

But these were not the only labours that occupied him during all this time. To a translation of *Polybius*, the favourite book of his boyhood, executed by his friend Sir Henry Shere, he prefixed an admirable character of that historian ; and he contributed a short introduction to *A Dialogue on Women*, published by Mr. William Walsh, a gentleman for whom he entertained a strong regard, and whose critical powers he esteemed so highly that in the postscript to *Virgil* he speaks of him as ‘ the best critic in our language.’\* Walsh submitted his Dialogue in the first instance to Dryden for his

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dred guineas—seventy or eighty pounds, the produce of the third night at the theatre, and thirty guineas for the copyright from the bookseller.

\* William Walsh was born at Abberley, in Worcestershire, in 1663. At fifteen he was entered a gentleman commoner at Wadham College, Oxford, but quitted the university without taking a degree. He afterwards travelled, and on his return acquired some distinction in the best circles by his tastes and accomplishments. He is said to have been ostentatiously splendid in his dress, and to have been considered a man of fashion, which perhaps enhanced his reputation as a critic and a scholar. He was afterwards Groom of the Chambers to Queen Anne, was once returned to parliament for Richmond, in Yorkshire, and several times represented his native county. He is described by his biographers as a man who was better known by his familiarity with great writers than by any writings of his own. His poems are slight and scanty. Nash, in his *History of Worcestershire*, says, ‘ that he died at Marlborough, in Wiltshire, in 1707 ;’ the *Biographie Universelle* assigns 1709 as the year of his death.

opinion, and I am enabled, through the kindness of Sir Henry Dryden, to enrich this biography with the letter in which Dryden conveyed to his friend the criticism he desired. The original letter is in the possession of Sir Henry Dryden, at Canons-Ashby, and was presented to his father, the late Sir Henry Dryden, by Dr. Samuel Butler, Bishop of Lichfield and Coventry. It is now published for the first time, and is peculiarly interesting, from the unusual minuteness of its verbal criticism. The letter is undated, but the time when it was written is determined by the subject to which it refers.

You command me Deare Sir, to make a kind of critique on your Essay: tis an hard province; but if I were able to undertake it, possibly, a greater prooфе of friendship is scarcely to be found; where to be truly a friend, a man must seeme to exercise a little malice. As it happens, I am now incumberd with some necessary business, relating to one of my Sonns; which when it is over, I shall have more leysure to obey you, in case there appeare any farther need. There is not the least occasion of reflecting on your disposition of the piece, nor the thoughts. I see nothing to censure in either of them. Besides this the style is easy and naturall; as fit for Dialogue, as if you had set Tully before you; and as gallant as Fontenelle in his plurality of Worlds. In the correctness of the English there is not much for me to animadvert. Be pleas'd therefore, to avoid the words, don't, can't, shan't, and the like abbreviations of syllables; which seem to me to savour of a little rusticity. As for Pedantry you are not to be tax'd with it. I remember I hinted somewhat of concluding your Sentences with prepositions or conjunctions sometimes, which is not elegant, as in your first sentence—(See the consequences of.) I find likewise, that you make not a due distinction betwixt that, and who; A man *that* is not proper; the relative *who* is proper. *That*, ought always to signify a thing; *who*, a person. An acquaintance *that* wou'd have *undertook* the business; true English is, an acquaintance who wou'd have *undertaken* the business. I am confident I need not proceed with these little criticisms, which are rather cavillings. Philareque, or the Critique on Balzac, observes it as a fault in his style, that he has in many places written twenty words together (*en suite*) which were all Monosylla-

bles. I observe this in some lines of your Noble Epigramm: \* and am often guilty of it myself through hastinesse. Mr. Waller counted this a vertue of the English tongue, that it cou'd bring so many words of the Teutonique together, and yet the smoothness of the Verse not vitiated. Now I am speaking of your Epigramm, I am sure you will not be offended with me for saying, there is some imperfection in the two last lines.

Blend 'em together, Fate, ease both their paine; And of two wretches make one happy man. The word blend includes the sense of *together*; ease both their paine: paine is Singular, both is Plurall. But indeed *paine* may have a collective and plurall signification. Then the Rhyme is not full of pain and Man. An half rhyme is not always a fault; but in the close of any paper of verses, tis to be avoyded. And after all, tell me truly, if those words, ease both their paine; were not superfluous in the sence, and onily put, for the sake of the rhyme, and filling up the verse. It came into my head to alter them, and I am affrayd for the worse.

Kind Fate, or Fortune, blend them, if you can: And, of two wretches, make one happy man. Kind fate looks a little harsh: fate without an epithet, is always taken in the ill sence. *Kind* added, changes that signification. (*Fati valet hora benigni.*) The words (if you can) have almost the same fault I tax'd in your ending of the line: but being better considerd, that is, whether fortune or fate, can alter a Man's temper, who is already so temperd: and leaving it doubtfull, I thinke does not prejudice the thought, in the last line. Now I begin, to be in for Cakes and Ale; and why should I not put a quere on those other lines? Poor Shift, does all his whole contrivance set, To spend that wealth he wants the Sence to get. All his whole contrivance, is but all

\* The following is the epigram referred to:—

#### GRIPE AND SHIFTER.

Rich Gripe does all his thoughts and cunning bend,  
T' encrease that wealth he wants the soul to spend.  
Poor Shifter does his whole contrivance set,  
To spend that wealth he wants the sense to get.  
How happy would appear to each his fate,  
Had Gripe his humour, or he Gripe's Estate!  
Kind fate and fortune, blend them if you can,  
And of two wretches make one happy man.

It will be seen, that Walsh implicitly adopted Dryden's suggestions.

his Contrivance, or his whole Contrivance ; thus, one of those words, lookes a little like tautology. Then an ill natur'd man might ask, how he cou'd spend wealth, not having the sence to get it ? But this is trifling, in me. For your sence is very intelligible ; which is enough to secure it. And, by your favour, so is Martial's : *Viribus hic non est, hic non est utilis annis :* and yet in exactness of Criticism, your censure stands good upon him.—I am call'd to dinner, and have onily time to add a great truth ; that I am from the bottome of my Soul, Deare Sir, Your most humble Servant and true lover

JOHN DRYDEN.

Your apostrophe's to your Mistresse, where you break off the thrid of your discourse, and address youreself to her, are, in my opinion, as fine turnes of gallantry, as I have mett with anywhere.

For My Honour'd Friend,  
William Walsh Esqr.  
These.

This was a species of criticism Dryden rarely troubled himself with in his published writings, which frequently exhibited utter indifference to the exact rules he here lays down for the guidance of his young friend. In this respect the difference between his poetry and prose is striking, for while in both there is the same muscular power, and comprehensive grasp, the closeness and accuracy of the one present a remarkable contrast to the rough carelessness with which, notwithstanding all its great merits in higher points of view, he puts out his vigour in the other. It is justly observed by Hallam, that he reasoned better in verse than in prose ; and Coleridge, who says that it is worthy of remark that all our great poets have been good prose writers, refers to Dryden as one of the best models, with this qualification, ‘if you add a stricter and purer grammar.’ In the structure of his sentences he was sometimes even illogical, an inadvertence of which, I believe, there is not a single instance to be found in his poems. Thus in a letter to his sons : ‘ Being now at Sir William Bowyer’s in the country, I cannot write at large, because I am somewhat indisposed with a cold, and am thick

of hearing, rather worse than I was in town.' *Being* in the country, he cannot write at large, *because* he has a cold and is thick of hearing. Again, as specimens of verbal heedlessness, in the Preface to the *State of Innocence*—'I will neither quote Lucan nor Statius,' instead of, 'I will quote neither Lucan nor Statius;\*' and in the Dedication of the *Rival Ladies*, 'the poet must contrive that sense into such words that the rhyme shall naturally follow them.' These and a hundred such are specks almost invisible in the sun: to which, however, this critical epistle involuntarily directs attention. The advice to Mr. Walsh is not the less valuable because Dryden did not himself follow his own precepts—a circumstance which rather enhances the interest of his scrupulousness in criticism.†

In 1693, a third volume of Miscellanies appeared, containing more translations; and in the same year Dryden brought out his drama of *Love Triumphant*. This was his last play. The year was memorable in theatrical annals, as having produced the first of Congreve's plays, and the last of Dryden's. But the stage was no longer prosperous, either for actors or authors, and Dryden formally took his leave of it on this occasion; and, from a passage in the preface to his son's play of the *Husband his own Cuckold*, it would seem that he seldom afterwards visited the theatre, which had been to him the scene of so many brilliant ovations. His last play, like his first, was a signal failure. 'Thus,' says Dr. Johnson, 'he began and ended his dramatic labours with ill success.'

*Love Triumphant* was constructed on a plan similar to

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\* Dr. Johnson, whose accuracy is a conspicuous part of his excellence, sometimes fell into similar carelessness; as for example, when speaking of the *Annus Mirabilis*, he says, 'It would not be hard to believe that Dryden had written the two first lines seriously, and that some wag had added the two latter in burlesque.' Here we have two first and two latter instead of first two and latter two.

† It is scarcely necessary to point out that he carries this scrupulousness to a false refinement with respect to the pronoun *that*, which is indiscriminately interchangeable with *who* and *which*, they alone being limited in their application, the former to persons, and the latter to things and the lower animals.

that of the *Spanish Friar*, a design announced in the public journals some time before its production. I find a still more interesting record of this circumstance in a letter of Dryden's to his friend Walsh, written in the course of the year 1693. The original letter is in the possession of Sir Thomas Phillipps, together with three others addressed about this period to the same correspondent. I have again to tender my best acknowledgments to Sir Thomas Phillipps for his liberality and courtesy in permitting me to publish them.

The first of these letters is of an earlier date than that in the possession of Sir Henry Dryden, and was probably written towards the close of 1690, or the beginning of 1691:—

MY DEARE PATRON,

Nothing cou'd please me better, than to know you as well by the endowments of your mind as by those of your person. I knew before this discovery, that you were ingenious but not that you were a Poet and one of the best that these times produce, or the succeeding times can expect. Give me leave not onely to honour, but to love you; and I shall endeavour on my part, to make more advances to you, than you have made to me, who am both by gratitude and by inclination

Your most faithfull humble servant

JOHN DRYDEN.

For my Honourd Friend

William Walsh, Esq.

These.

The next letter, obviously of the date of 1693, contains the allusion to the design of *Love Triumphant*:—

You may well wonder my Friend, that I have not written to you in so long a time, when I have nothing but laziness to plead in my excuse; which is not nor ought to be a reasonable plea. Yet I cou'd offer another reason for not writeing if my letters were worth excuseing. I am up [to] the Eares in law; and have been for six weekes together. I have been couensed of fifty pounds and more, by one whom I thought my Friend: and am afryad that at the long run I will rather loose it, and let him go whom I have arrested than prosecute him in the tedious court of Chancery; to do which I must pass through a tedious course of Common Law.

But to leave this, there passes nothing in the Town worth your knowing. Durfey has brought another Farce upon the Stage: but his luck has left him: it was sufferd but foure dayes; and then kickd off for ever. Yet his second Act was wonderfully diverting; where the scene was in Bedlam: and M<sup>r</sup>s Bracegirdle and Solon were mad: the singing was wonderfully good, and the two whom I namd sung better than Redding and M<sup>r</sup>s Ayloff, whose trade it was: at least our partiality carryed it for them. The rest was woeful stuff, and concluded with Catcalls of which the two noble Dukes of Richmond and S<sup>t</sup> Albans were chief managers. For other newes 'tis all uncertain, but we all believe that the King of France who was to set out from Versailles on Saturday last is gone for Flanders; and intends to offer Battle: in order to w<sup>ch</sup> we thinke he will besiege Maestrecht: the country about w<sup>ch</sup> being plaine and open he may poure in his horse upon them; of w<sup>ch</sup> he has fifty thousand, and the Confederates not above half that number. The great Turke takes the field this yeare in person as our Foreign Gazettes tell us. As for our descent on France; either we never did intend it or we do so still: and I believe the latter. For without prejudice or partiality, I look upon the confederacy to be upon its last legg after this Campaign, if K: William does not attempt something very extraordinary, and succeed in it. For which reason, I thinke you are very much in the right, not to press into publique business till you see the success of this ensuing summer. I spoke with a young Gentleman, who is just arrivd from Flander and came from Bruxelles. He assures me that not above a fortnight ago, the French burnt a village within a mile of the Town; and the Garrison though they knew of it, yet durst not venture out; that the Town wishes the French were Masters of it; and that generally the Hollanders are desirous of a peace. This is still to confirme you in your opinion of sitting still. I spoke to Mr Tonson to send you down the Bookes you desir'd; in order to the writeing of a preface before my next Play; if he has not done it I will remind him of it. For I shall be very proud, of your entring into the lists, though not against Rymer; yet as a champion for our cause, who defy the Chorus of the Ancients. The Play I am now writing is a feignd story: and a Tragicomedy of the nature of the Spanish Fryar: And I am sure the tale of it is likely to be diverting enough. I have plotted it all; and written two Acts of it. This morning

I had their cheif Comedian, whom they call Solon, with me; to consult with him concerning his own character: and truly I thinke he has the best understanding of any man in the Play house. M<sup>r</sup> Wycherleys Poems will not come out till Michaelmass terme: if his versification prove as well as his wit I shall believe it will be extraordinary. However Congreve and Southern and I shall not faile to appeare before it, and if you will come in he will have reason to acknowledge it for a favour. And on our sides, you shall be very welcome to make up the mess. I had this day a letter from my sonns at Rome; which to my wonder tells me, that on the fifteenth of April (on which day dated) they were in the extreamity of hott weather: so that they coud onely stirr out, morning and evening; and were already in the midst of peas and cherryes: 'tis quite contrary heere: where we have nothing but raine, cold weather, and a late spring time without any hope of any summer. Write me word if you please when we may hope to see you in Town, or whether at all this summer and what is become of the insurrection at Worcester, concerning the transportation of Corne. You may see I do not set up for a Wit in this letter: nor will at any time, with you to whom I profess an entire friendship. I had your Sydar safe; and it was as perfectly good, as I am sure you designd it.

I am Sir your most faithfull, humble Servant

JOHN DRYDEN.

Tuesday Afternoon,

May the 9<sup>th</sup> or 10<sup>th</sup>.

Ffor William Walsh Esq.

Att Abberley neare Worcester

These

To be left with the Postmaster of Worcester

to be conveyd as above directed.

The next letter refers to Congreve's *Double Dealer*, produced in November 1693, and contains the first allusion to Dryden's great project, the translation of *Virgil*, which he commenced in the following year. He here also alludes to that form of tragi-comedy, consisting of the alternation of comic and serious scenes, which he had long maintained on account of its success with the audience, and which he here appears to defend on that ground alone. He

had previously vindicated it in his dedication of the *Spanish Friar*. When this letter\* was written, *Love Triumphant* was in rehearsal, which determines the date—1693.

DEARE MR. WALSH

I have read your letter many times: and you know that when we repeat actions often, 'tis with pleasure. The Method which you have taken is wonderfully good; and not onely all present Poets, but all who are to come in England, will thanke you for freeing them from the too servile imitation of the Ancients. If hereafter the Audience will come to tast the confinement of the French (which I believe the English never will) then it will be easy for their Poets, to follow the strictness of the Mechanique rules, in the three Unities. In the meane time I am affrayd, for my sake you discover not your opinion concerning my Irregular way of Tragi-comedies, in my doppia favola. I beseech you let no consideration of mine hinder you from makeing a perfect Critique. I will never defend that practice: for I know it distracts the hearers. But I know, with all, that it has hitherto pleased them for the sake of variaty; and for the particular tast, which they have for low Comedy. Mascardi, in some of his Miscellany Treatises, has a chapter concerning this; and exemplifies, in the Satyr and Corisca of the Pastor Fido: As I remember those two persons though not of a piece with the rest, yet serve in the conclusion, to the discovery and beauty of the design. Your Critique, by your description of its bulk, will be too large for a preface to my Play which is now studying; but cannot be acted till after Christmasse is over. I call it *Love Triumphant*, or Nature will prevaile: Unless instead of the second Title, you like this other Neither Side to blame, which is very proper, to the two chief characters of the heroe and Heroine who notwithstanding the Extravagance of their passion, are neither of them faulty, either in duty, or in Honour. Your judgement on it, if you please. When you do me the favour to send your Booke, I will take care to correct the press; and to have it printed well. It will be more for your honour too, to print it alone, to take off the sus-

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\* A couple of short fragments from this letter, incorrectly copied, fell into the hands of Malone, who published them, as he received them, in his *Life of Dryden*, expressing his regret that he could only give a short extract. He does not state from whom he procured them, or how they came into his possession.

pition of your being too much my friend, I meane too partiall to me if it come in company of my Play. I have remembred you to all your friends; and in particular to Congreve, who sends you his play, as a present from himselfe, by this conveyance; and much desires the honour of being better known to you. His Double Dealer is much censurd by the greater part of the Town: and is defended onely by the best judges, who, you know, are commonly the fewest yet it gets ground daily, and has already been acted Eight times. The women thinke he has exposd their Bitchery too much; and the gentlemen are offended with him, for the discovery of their follyes: and the way of their Intrigues, under the notion of Friendship to their Ladyes Husbands. My verses which you will find before it were written before the play was acted, but I neither alterd them nor do I alter my opinion of the play. For other newes, you will heare from all hands; that the House of Lords grow very warm; and have a mind to try the Land Admiralls: those of the sea having been acquitted by the Commons. Yet they have orderd Rook, Killigrew, Shovell and the Turkish Merchants to appeare before them: and on the other side, the King has taken away the Commissions of the Marine Admiralls. You know Russell will be the Man. The Whig party, who brought in the King thinke Killigrew and his Brethren Jacobites, and my Lord Carmarthen with all the High Church men to be betrayers of the Government. In my Conscience they wrong them. The Commons are inspecting their own House, for the private pensions: which Squib pretends to discover, and will name above an hundred men: it will all come to nothing I believe, by the over votes of the other side, in both Houses; when they are tird, they will give the six Millions; and next Michaelmass, we shall have a new Parliament: but for the Trienniall Bill, now sent down for the Lords, I conceive it will be thrown out by the Commons: because of the Rider, which explains the word Holden not to signify to hold. We heare of about ten of our Easterland Ships and two small Men of Warr are taken by Du Bart, and carried into France: they were laden with corne and other provisions. Last, for my selfe: I have undertaken to translate all Virgil; and as an Essay have already paraphrasd the third Georgique, as an Example; it will be publishd in Tonsons next Miscellanies, in Hillary terme. I propose to do it by subscription; haveing an hundred and two Brass Cutts, with the Coat of Armes of

the subscriber to each Cutt; every Subscriber to pay five guineys: half in hande besides another inferiour Subscription of two guineys, for the rest whose names are onely written in a Catalogue, printed with the Book.

I am Dear Sir

Your most faithfull servant

Dec 12<sup>th</sup>

JOHN DRYDEN

For William Walsh Esq.

At Abberley neare Worcester

These

By Worcester Stage Coach

With a small parcell in paper, directed to Mr. Walsh.

I have received your verses to M<sup>r</sup> ——: but cannot stay to read them, before I put up this letter, 'tis so late att night.

The success of the *Miscellanies* to which Dryden had contributed, led to a spurious imitation of them by his old publisher, Herringman, the character of which he touches upon in the next letter:—

#### MY FRIEND

Yesterday morning my Lord Leycester sent his gentleman to me to let you know by me that he had made enquiry about the place you mentioned; and found that some dayes before your letter came, it had been given away to one M<sup>r</sup>. Carey, who had possest it in the time of K: Charles 2<sup>d</sup>, and that this gentleman was actually sworn into it. I suppose that you imagind a place of that benefit being now worth 1500 p<sup>r</sup> annum, woud not be long voyd: & therefore set not your heart upon it. I spoke for places in the coach too late; there will be none voyd till next weeke. Tonson has likewise fayld me in the publishing his *Miscellanyes* tho that shou'd not have hinder'd me any longer [than] till Saturday I thinke I gave you an account of all things in your letter: onely forgot, perhaps one thing: wch is you desir'd to know what kind of book it was which Herringman or his man publish'd under the name of *Miscellany-Poems*: they are almost all old as I am informed and have been most of them printed before. One or two of my Lord Roscomons excepted. Nobdy vallues them nor would you yourself as my Friends tell me. I gave your service to

Congreve, who is since gone out of Town for a month or six weeks. No news I thinke: that of the ships is at a stand. We have lost about forty or fifty, including the Dutch Merchants de Tourvalles letter to his king sayes he has destroyd seaven Dutch and English men of warr and that he is still in pursuit of merchants ships. Huy I thinke I told you is taken; and so is Darmstaad nere Frankfort: the dauphin and Lorg are gone to find Louis of Baden, who is not above 24 thousand strong: Saxony will not joine him unless he may command: and in probability has taken French money to lye still The Confederacy totters; for the Emperour is inclin'd to treat, but France will grant no cessation in the meane time. All things favour the Monarch who pushes round him; and our fleet yesterday was in Torbay: no newes of Rook since his last letter we guess him gone for Ireland with the remainder of his scatterd covey.

I am Sir  
Your most faithfull Servant  
JOHN DRYDEN.

Thursday

For William Walsh Esq  
Att Abberley neere Worcester  
These  
To be left at the posthouse in Worcester,  
and whence conveyed.

Dryden now commenced the most arduous of all his labours, the translation of *Virgil*. His own impression of the weight and responsibility of the undertaking may be gathered from an expression in one of his letters to Jacob Tonson, in which, apparently in reply to the urgency of the publisher, he says, ‘It would require seven years to translate *Virgil* exactly.’ His great energy, however, and extraordinary facility, mastered the task in a third of that time; and the work, begun some time in 1694, was completed by the close of 1696. Nor did it even occupy the whole of that interval. In 1695 he contrived to find leisure enough to translate Du Fresnoy’s Latin poem on the *Art of Pleasing*, for which he wrote an elaborate preface,\* and in 1696 he published a *Life of Lucian*. The

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\* The work, says Malone, of twelve mornings.

*Ode on the Death of Purcell* was produced within the same period. The translation of *Virgil* was published in July, 1797; and in the following month appeared the most popular of all his poems, the *Ode on Alexander's Feast*. It might be almost asserted, that advancing years had strengthened his powers, and quickened his imagination.

The *Virgil* was evidently regarded, on all hands, as a project of the highest literary magnitude. The nation, as Dr. Johnson has observed, seemed to consider its honour interested in the event. Every person who could contribute to his assistance tendered him aid of some sort, from Addison, who furnished the arguments of the books and an Essay on the Georgics, to Mr. Gilbert Dolben, who presented him with as many editions of the original as he could procure. This general anxiety penetrated even to the court, and there is reason to believe that the dedication of the work to the king would not have been unacceptable. But upon that point Dryden was inexorable, and preferred to divide the honour between three patrons, for which he incurred the coarse censure of Swift.

As if this stupendous labour had only trained him for fresh toils, and still more formidable expeditions, he seriously contemplated the translation of *Homer* in the following year. In rendering *Virgil* into English, he discovered that *Homer* was a poet more after his own genius. He thought he could do him more justice ‘in his fiery way of writing, which, as it is liable to more faults, so it is capable of more beauties than the exactness and sobriety of *Virgil*.’ Other engagements, however, prevented him from proceeding with a plan which he was qualified, above all men, to execute with success.

During the period when he was employed upon *Virgil* he made frequent journeys into the country, especially into Northamptonshire; and we learn from Malone that one portion of his task was performed at the seat of Sir William Bowyer, in Buckinghamshire (from whence he addressed a letter, previously quoted, to his sons at Rome), and another at the mansion of the Earl of Essex, at Burleigh. He also

visited his cousin at Chesterton (where he wrote the first lines on a pane of glass), and his friend and kinswoman, Mrs. Steward, at Cotterstock. On one of these latter occasions he was accompanied by his son Charles; and amongst the letters published by Malone there is one, dated September 28, 1699, to Mrs. Steward, giving a description of his return to London, in which the incidents of a stage-coach journey in those days are pleasantly related. Amongst the letters in the possession of Sir Thomas Phillipps, I find one from Charles Dryden, with a postscript added by his father, evidently referring to that visit. It is without date or superscription; but there is no doubt it was addressed to Mrs. Steward, sometime in October 1699:—

MADAM,

I have been so sensible of the loss of your charming conversation ever since my departure, that I assure you in all my travells I never left any place with more reluctance than Cotterstock, and never found any satisfaction equal to what I enjoyd there. I have enclosd the papers which you were pleasd to lend me and have read them with extream pleasure as I should receive anything which comes from your fair hands. I heartily hope this may find you in better health, for as I am infinitely obligd so nobody can wish your happiness in all respects more than my selfe. With my most humble service to my cousin Steward for all his favours,

I am Madam,

Your most obedient humble servant

CHARLES DRYDEN

[On the other side.]

MADAM

I pretend not to write to you: if I did I should not have borrowd a corner in my sonns letter: But even then I should have filld my paper, before I had emptyd my thoughts, for I can never express with words how much your underservd favours have wonn on me: Dr. Radclyff calls Northamptonshire a shineing country I doubt not but he means for hospitality: and yet he has never been at Cotterstock: The two young gentlemen who sayd they were almost starvd with you, had better fortune than I found, who can complain of nothing too much, of a variety of daintyes. But you, it

seems were sparing to them of your company, which had certainly been thrown away upon them; that I confess I had, and of that only I can never surfeit who am with all manner of respect and gratitude

Madam your most oblig'd kinsman

And most humble servant

JOHN DRYDEN

Be please'd to give my most humble service to my cousin  
Steward his sister and all your little fair family.

The engagement which prevented Dryden from at once embarking in *Homer*, was the volume of *Fables* from Chaucer and Boccaccio, in which, within a few months of the close of his incessant and varied toils, he displayed a richer vein of fancy, and more sweetness and grace, than in any of the numerous works he had previously produced. His imagination, liberated from grosser elements, had become purified and elevated, and we have here the spiritual charm untainted, which in his dramas was clouded by sensuousness. It is here we find those lines, familiar to all readers, in which he depicts the condition of age still conscious of the divine influence of beauty—

'Old as I am, for ladies' love unfit,  
The power of beauty I remember yet,  
Which once inflamed my soul, and now inspires my wit.'

The soul was no longer inflamed, but the wit was brighter than ever. 'Old men,' he says, in a letter to Mrs. Steward at this time, 'are not so insensible of beauty as you young ladies think.' This sense of beauty pervades every page of the *Fables*.

In claiming for these poems the character I have attributed to them, and which certainly offers a remarkable contrast to the literature out of which Dryden emerged into this region of sweet air, I have not overlooked the fact, that they contain exceptional passages. Such passages, however, are of rare occurrence; and in one instance only, which I have noted in the proper place, does the old taint of prurience call for special observation. To interpolate a 'loose description' in a

tale of Boccaccio will not be considered, after all, so great an offence against the decorum of the original, as Mr. Macaulay would make it appear; and justice required, that in marking this offence with proper reprobation, his critic should have indicated at the same time the freedom of the *Fables* generally from a similar tendency. If Dryden misses the subtlety and delicacy of Chaucer, it will not be denied that he has sometimes shunned his grossness, and frequently expanded his descriptions with a creative fancy at once chaste and luxuriant. Whether we regard the *Flower and the Leaf* as the work of ‘threescore and seven,’\* or of a writer who lived in an age of unparalleled licentiousness, it must equally excite surprise and admiration. The beauty of that poem is not more fascinating than its purity, a virtue which, to be truly appreciated, should be tested by the morality that prevailed at the close of the seventeenth century.

Notwithstanding the anathema of Mr. Macaulay, it may be affirmed, that in the latter years of his life Dryden was thoroughly conscious of the sins against taste and modesty he had committed in his dramatic works. We have numerous proofs of this in expressions of regret scattered over his writings, and a marked recantation of all such errors in a private letter written late in 1699. This letter was addressed to Mrs. Thomas, who had asked his opinion of some of her verses. After admonishing her to avoid the licence Mrs. Behn had allowed herself of writing loosely, and giving scandal to her sex, he goes on, ‘I confess I am the last man who ought, in justice, to arraign her, who have been myself too much a libertine in most of my poems, which I should be well contented I had time either to purge or to see them fairly burned.’ Although it cannot be said of Dryden that he had never written a line which, ‘dying, he could wish to blot,’ it is at least to his honour that, having written many

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\* See his letter to Mrs. Steward, in which he says he is still drudging at the *Fables*, ‘which I hope will be well enough; if otherwise, three score and seven may be pardon’d.’—*Mis. Works*, ii. 82.

such lines, he would have purged or burned them if he could.

The epistle to his cousin, John Driden, of Chesterton, composed some time before, was published in the same volume with the *Fables*. Upon this piece he bestowed unusual pains, correcting it, as he tells us in one of his letters, with great care before he submitted it to his cousin, to whom he shewed it in the country. There was a tradition in the family that in return for these verses his cousin presented him with a sum of £500. Mr. Malone is inclined to reduce the amount, upon speculation, to £100. That he did receive a handsome acknowledgment is placed beyond doubt by a passage in a letter to Mrs. Steward, in which he says, speaking of the volume containing the verses, that he always thought them the best of the whole, ‘and, to my comfort, the Town thinks them so; and he, which pleases me most, is of the same judgment, as appears by a noble present he has sent me, which surprised me, because I did not in the least expect it.’\*

Dryden had now reached the age of sixty-nine. His mental powers were clear and vigorous, but severe illness had long impaired his physical strength. He suffered up to the last from the combined afflictions of gout and gravel; and in December, 1699, erysipelas appeared in one of his legs. Amidst all this anguish, however, there were intervals of ease, during which he continued his labours with unremitting diligence and fortitude, and within three weeks of his death he produced the *Secular Margin*, and the Prologue and Epilogue for the revival of Fletcher’s *Pilgrim*. In these spirited pieces, which rival his most famous compositions in point, brilliancy, and force, he answered Collier’s attack upon the stage, recently published, and embalmed Blackmore in immortal satire.

It was stipulated by Vanbrugh, who had prepared the *Pilgrim* for revival on this occasion, that, in consideration of the Masque and the accompanying Prologue and Epilogue,

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\* *Mis. Works*, ii. 129.

Dryden should receive the profits of the third night's performance; but from a passage in the printed copy of the play Malone conjectures that it was not acted until after Dryden's death. The probability, however, is, that it was produced on the day for which it seems to have been intended, the 25th of March, when the new century commenced, according to the old calendar, and that the passage referred to by Malone was afterwards introduced into the printed copy.

During the greater part of March and April, the poet was confined to his house in Gerard-street. Towards the end of April, mortification set in, and his surgeon recommended amputation as the only means of averting death. Dryden refused to undergo the operation. He said that he had not many years to live by the course of nature, and would rather patiently submit to death, than attempt to prolong an uncomfortable existence by a painful and uncertain experiment. He is said to have looked forward to his dissolution with perfect resignation, and to have taken a tender farewell of his friends. The struggle did not last long. He expired at three o'clock on the morning of the 1st of May, 1700.\*

Dryden died so poor, that the expenses of his funeral were undertaken by subscription. His friend Montague, afterwards Lord Halifax, charged himself with the care of the last rites, at first intended to be private; but Lord Jefferies (the second son of the chancellor), considering that public honour was due to so great a poet, prevailed upon the family to delay the interment for that purpose. The requisite funds were raised by contributions; and the body was conveyed to the College of Physicians, where it was embalmed, and lay in state for ten days. Dr. Garth pronounced the funeral oration in Latin, which was followed by the last Ode of the third Book of *Horace*—*Exegi monumentum ære perennius, &c.*; and on the 13th of May, the mournful procession, preceded, strangely enough,

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\* In most of the collections the year is stated to have been 1701. Mr. Malone corrected the error.

by a band of music, and attended by nearly fifty carriages. went forward to Westminster Abbey, where the remains of Dryden were deposited between the graves of Chaucer and Cowley.

The press teemed with tributes to his memory, of which the ‘*Luctus Britannici*, or the Tears of the British Muses for the Death of John Dryden,’ consisting of a collection of English and Latin Elegies, and ‘*The Nine Muses*, a Poem written by Nine several Ladies, upon the Death of the late famous John Dryden, Esq.,’ appear to have been the most considerable.

All the members of Dryden’s family survived him. His widow became insane soon after his decease, and lingered in that lamentable condition till 1714. The marriage had never been productive of happiness to either. Dissimilarity of tastes and tempers had early clouded their domestic life. The lady was afflicted with a wayward and discontented disposition, which not only interrupted the quiet essential to her husband’s pursuits, but repulsed his friends, whose intercourse with her came at last to be limited to mere visits of ceremony.\* She does not appear to have entered into the circles that courted his society, nor to have accompanied him on any of his visits into the country. Yet whenever he speaks of her in his letters, it is always to blend her name cordially with his own. The allusions are scanty, but they never betray the secret of her infirmity,† which, we may infer from the

\* Malone, on the authority of Lady Dryden.

† The well-known Epitaph—

Here lies my wife ; here let her lie ;  
She's now at rest—and so am I !

has been ascribed to Dryden, as being intended for his wife. The manliness of his nature, which always made him hide her failings, would justify us in rejecting so obvious a calumny, even if the old French epitaph (quoted by Malone) did not show that the lines are a translation.

‘C'y gist ma femme : O, qu'elle est bien  
Pour son repos,—et pour le mien !’

painful sequel, had its origin in a source that called for pity and tenderness rather than reproof.\*

Dryden had three sons—Charles, born at Charlton, in 1666, who was drowned in an attempt to swim across the Thames at Datchett, in 1704; John, born about 1667 or 1668, who died of a fever, in Rome, in 1701: and Erasmus Henry, born in 1669, who died at Canons-Ashby, in 1710. They were all educated in the Roman-catholic faith, and were sent to Rome at an early period, where they received appointments in the service of the Pope, Charles and John in his household, and Erasmus in his guards. Charles was the favourite son, and the only one who was in England at the time of his father's death. By the death of Sir Robert Driden, in 1708, the title devolved on Erasmus Henry, the third son of the poet, who is supposed to have inherited his mother's malady, and to have lived at Canons-Ashby in a state of imbecility till his death, when he was succeeded in the title by his uncle Erasmus (the brother of the poet), who died in 1718, the title descending to his grandson John, at whose decease the baronetcy expired. The estates devolved on Sir John's niece, Elizabeth, who married Mr. John Turner, brother of Sir Gregory Page Turner. This gentleman assumed the surname and arms of Dryden by sign manual, on the 16th of December, 1791, and was created a baronet on the 2nd of May, 1795. He was succeeded, in 1797, by his son John Edward, who was succeeded, in 1818, by his brother, the Rev. Sir Henry Dryden, who, dying in 1837, was succeeded by his son, Sir Henry Edward Leigh Dryden, the present representative of the family.

Looking back upon the life of the poet, we cannot fail to be struck by the affectionate regard with which he inspired all his contemporaries who were intimate with him, or who

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\* Malone observes that no account of her person has been preserved, nor any portrait of her discovered. But there is a portrait in the dining-room at Canons-Ashby which is said to be that of Lady Elizabeth. It is common-place, and somewhat shrewish in expression. If it be genuine, the lady was not remarkable for beauty.

had opportunities of ascertaining how he was estimated by his friends. Investigating anew the materials for his biography, with the assistance of additional information, I have seen occasion to revise some opinions on other points; but the farther I have pursued the inquiry into his private character, the more it appears entitled to respect and admiration. He was devotedly attached to his family, and kind, forbearing, and gentle in all his personal relations. His nature was so noble, that he readily forgave offences, and even injuries; and his friendships were so sincere and earnest, that he frequently strained his own limited resources in performing acts of generosity. In his personal bearing, his modesty almost amounted to diffidence and humility. ‘To the best of my knowledge and observation,’ observes Congreve, ‘he was, of all men that ever I knew, one of the most modest, and the most easily to be discountenanced in his approaches either to his superiors or his equals.’\* He was as easy of access as he was slow and hesitating in his advances to others. Consulted by numerous writers, some of whom were strangers to him, upon questions of taste and criticism, he tendered advice with as much readiness and patience as he was himself willing to receive it from whatever quarter it came.†

His conversation was heavy and sluggish, but in writing his thoughts flowed in upon him so rapidly, that the only difficulty was that of selection. Some of his plays were planned and ready for rehearsal in a few weeks, and his prose works, with few exceptions, bear evident marks of great

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\* He carried this modesty so far that he could not prevail upon himself to cultivate the favour of his patrons by ordinary visits of ceremony. ‘For my own part,’ he says, in a dedication to the Earl of Sunderland, ‘I never could shake off the rustic bashfulness which hangs upon my nature; but valuing myself as little as I am worth, have been afraid to render even the common duties of respect to those who are in power. The ceremonious visits which are generally paid on such occasions, are not my talent.’

† We have remarkable illustrations of his patience and indulgence, both with those who consulted and those who criticised him, in the cases of Mrs. Thomas and Dean Lockier. See the Correspondence with Mrs. Thomas, *Mis. Works*, II. p. 60, and Spence, p. 60.

fluency in composition. In society he was retiring, and generally silent, a peculiarity which he has himself frankly recorded in excusing the want of sprightliness in his comedies. ‘My conversation,’ he tells us, ‘is slow and dull; my humour saturnine and reserved; in short, I am none of those who endeavour to break jests in company, or make repartees. So that those who decry my comedies do me no injury, except it be in point of profit; reputation in them is the last thing to which I shall pretend.’\* Yet although he was one of those men described by Dr. Johnson, ‘whose powers operate only at leisure and in retirement, and whose intellectual vigour deserts them in conversation,’ his scanty words were weighty, and commanded attention. ‘Though not so talkative,’ says a contemporary, ‘as the modern men of banter, what he says is like what he writes, much to the purpose, and full of mighty sense.’ At Wills’, in his winter seat near the fire, or in his summer seat in the balcony, he ruled the realm of letters like a potentate; and whoever enjoyed the advantages of a closer intimacy with him at his house in Gerard-street, ‘the fifth door on the left hand, coming from Newport-street,’† in the little dark parlour, looking on the street, where he pursued his labours, discovered in him those genial qualities, and that rich store of erudition, which the embarrassments of general society obstructed in the utterance.

He was also an indifferent reader, tedious and pointless in delivery, and incapable of communicating to his own writings the variety of cadence and expression they demanded. Cibber assures us that when he read his play of *Amphitryon* for the actors, although he made the sense plain enough, yet it was so cold, flat, and unaffected, as to make the description of it hardly to be credited.

Of his personal habits, we learn that he was inordinately addicted to snuff, which he was so particular about, that he pre-

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\* *Defence of an Essay of Dramatic Poesy.*

† Letter to Mrs. Steward.

pared it for his own use. The only amusement in which he appears to have indulged was angling; it yielded him the relaxation he needed, without entailing trouble or excitement. Neither the universal pastime of bowls, nor the favourite games of cards which were played in every house from the palace at Whitehall to the dens in Moorfields, tempted him to deviate from the regularity of his life. There is an anecdote extant of his playing at bowls with Lord Mulgrave, when he was once on a visit with that nobleman in Yorkshire; but the dishonourable trick it imputes to his lordship disentitles it to credit. He entered into none of the prevailing levities or vices; which was the more remarkable in an age when men of all ranks and professions, including his closest friends, freely surrendered themselves to the dissipation and pleasures of the town. Lord Lansdowne says of him, that all his acquaintances could vouch that ‘he was a man of regular life and sober conversation.’ Dennis tells us, that he was ‘naturally an extreme sober man,’ adding, that ‘for the last ten years of his life he was much acquainted with Addison, and drank with him more than ever he used to do; probably so far as to hasten his end.’\* The fact is memorable, and suggests some grave considerations respecting the morality of that criticism which has heaped ignominy on the poet, and held up the dangerous associate of his latter years as a model of all the virtues!

These social excesses took place at Will’s, the only relief from his systematic labours Dryden permitted himself to enjoy. His daily course was to write all the morning, dine in the simplest manner,† and walk down to Will’s in the

\* Pope also bears witness against Addison. He says that Addison used to dine at Button’s, and stay there five or six hours, sometimes far into the night. ‘I was of the company for about a year,’ he adds, ‘but I found it too much for me; it hurt my health, and so I quitted it.’—SPENCE.

† ‘As for the rarities you promise, if beggars might be choosers, a part of a chine of honest bacon wou’d please my appetite better than all the marrow puddings; for I like them better plain, having a very vulgar stomach.’—Letter to Mrs. Stewart.

evening, where he was sure of meeting the few people with whom he cared to unbend from his studies. Pope, speaking of Dryden, testifies to the excellence of his reputation, but not without a qualification which marks significantly the difference of their characters. ‘Dryden,’ says Pope, ‘was not a very genteel man; he was intimate with none but poetical men. He was said to be a very good man, by all that knew him; he was as plump as Mr. Pitt; of a fresh colour, and a down look, and not very conversible.’\* This little slight upon Dryden’s *gentility* is a touch of conventional criticism that might have been expected from Pope; yet it is curious that Congreve, who was sensitive to weakness on such points, never discovered any deficiency of breeding in Dryden. Congreve is undoubtedly the more trustworthy authority of the two, having been long intimate with Dryden, while Pope, who was much under twelve years old when he saw him, could have known nothing of his manners or habits, except what he took in at a cursory glance. Nor is he correct in stating that Dryden was intimate with none but poetical men. Malone enumerates a considerable group of men of rank with whom he associated, and the list might be easily enlarged if that sort of display could vindicate his ‘gentility,’ or add anything to his fame. To do Pope justice, however, he did not qualify his admiration of Dryden’s character. ‘I was not so happy as to know him;’ he observes, in a letter to Wycherley; ‘*Virgilium tantum vidi.* Had I been born early enough I must have known and loved him; for I have been assured, not only by yourself, but by Mr. Congreve and Sir William Turnbull, that his personal qualities were as amiable as his poetical.’

The licentiousness of Dryden’s plays admits of no palliation or defence. He wrote for a licentious stage in a profligate age, and supplied, much to his own disgrace, the kind of material the vicious taste of his audiences demanded. Nor will it serve his reputation to contrast his productions in this

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\* Spence, p. 261.

way with those of others. Shadwell alone transcended him in depravity. But there is some compensation for all this grossness in turning from his plays to his life, and marking the contrast. The morality of his life—the practical test of his heart and his understanding—was unimpeachable. The ingenuity of slander was exhausted in assailing his principles, and exposing his person to obloquy—but the morality of his life comes pure out of the furnace. The only hint of personal indiscretion ascribed to him is that of having eaten tarts with Mrs. Reeve, the actress, in the Mulberry garden, which, if true, amounts to nothing, but which, trivial as it is, must be regarded as apocryphal.\* To eat tarts with an actress did not necessarily involve any grave delinquency in a poet who was writing for the theatre; yet upon this slight foundation, for I have not been able to discover that it rests upon any other, a suspicion has been raised, that Mrs. Reeve was his mistress. By way, however, of mitigating the odium of this unwarrantable imputation, it is added, that after his marriage Dryden renounced all such associations. But his relations with Mrs. Reeve, if he ever had any, must have been formed after his marriage, as a reference to dates will show; so that the supposititious scandal, as it has been transmitted to us, conveys its own refutation.

Dryden's change of religion must ever remain an open question, to be discussed with such candour as the prejudices of men will permit them to bring to the consideration of topics of this nature. The apostate is always exposed to distrust. The community he joins is hardly more charitable in its constructions than the community he deserts; and the least instructed of mankind, whose profession of faith is a

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\* I have elsewhere entered into the details which induce me to reject the authenticity of this anecdote. It has been ascribed to Southerne; but, independently of the evidence of dates, which proves that it could not have been communicated by him, the internal evidence is conclusive against such a supposition. The writer was evidently not acquainted with Dryden, and speaks of having 'once' eaten tarts with him, as a memorable incident. Southerne was intimate with Dryden; and if he had left any reminiscences of him, would have recorded something more important than the tarts, the sword, and the chadraux.

matter of habit and inheritance, and not of inquiry and conviction, stands on his barren steadfastness, and believes himself entitled to impugn the motives of him who, in the face of social obloquy, deliberately renounces the creed in which he was educated. The few alone will endeavour to judge more thoughtfully, or refrain from judging at all. Dr. Johnson anticipates at large the common verdict; for, let us reason out of circumstances as we may, we must still return to his words—‘that conversion will always be suspected that apparently concurs with interest.’ The doubt is, whether Dryden’s conversion *did* concur with interest. When Dr. Johnson applied this sentence to Dryden, it was under the impression that the additional pension and the conversion took place about the same time. The discovery, however, of the fact that the additional pension was of a much earlier date, interposes a considerable interval between them, and to that extent refutes the circumstantial evidence of their connexion.

Upon none of our poets have more conflicting judgments been pronounced than upon Dryden. The unanimous verdicts of his critics assign him a high place; but remarkable differences exist, in determining exactly what that place is. It will sufficiently exhibit these differences, to note, that while Hazlitt places him below Pope, and at the head of the second class of poets, Coleridge—who will not admit him to be a poet at all—places him immeasurably above Pope. “Cowley *was* a poet,” observes Coleridge, “which, with all my unfeigned admiration of his vigorous sense, his agile logical wit, and his high excellencies of diction and metre, is more than (in the *strict* sense of the term poet) I can conscientiously say of Dryden. Only if Pope was a *poet*, as Lord Byron swears, then Dryden, I admit, was a *very great poet*.”\* Now, out of this conflict of judgments comes an indestructible fame, commanding the common assent of all. There must have been a permanent element in his genius to produce this.

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\* MS. notes on Pepys in *Notes and Queries*, VI. 214.

What was it? In one word—power. This power, inclusive of many modes of excellence, and never failing him in its application, was his great characteristic. A more precise definition might be given; but for a succinct and general answer to the question, What was it that raised Dryden above all his contemporaries, and preserves him on his elevation? this is sufficiently close and comprehensive. He was distinguished, above all things else, for strength of thought, strength of purpose, strength of diction. He was a strong man in verse and prose; bold, energetic, self-reliant, and wide in his reach. There was no weakness in Dryden; no compromise of means or ends. Perhaps there was not much tenderness; yet he had a certain manly sweetness at times, that was all the more precious and affecting from its rarity, and because it seemed to come from the depths of his nature. There was real physical passion—undisguised sensuousness; no love. Robust in all things, his poetry has a weight and an earnestness that take it out of the atmosphere of the imaginative. It is never airy, never sportive. He made poetry the vehicle of politics and controversy, not of feeling or of fancy. There is not a single love passage throughout the whole, such as we find in Shakspeare or in Fletcher, touching the spring of tears in the heart, and awakening in the reader the emotion it depicts. When he ventures in this direction, it is to exhibit highly-wrought artificial turns of gallantry, as in the *Lines on the Duchess of Portsmouth*; or luscious descriptions, as in the *Cymon and Iphigenia*. He treads heavily, and every foot-fall crushes the earth beneath. He has none of the characteristics of the cavalier party to which he belonged, except their licentiousness, and that only when it suits his purpose on the stage. He has none of their grace, their sophistry, their lace-work. Even his licentiousness differed from theirs. It was too lusty for their showy and volatile spirits.

There was nothing of what is called sentiment in Dryden. He seldom produces any other emotions than those of indignation, ridicule, or surprise. He constantly makes you think,

but very rarely makes you feel. There are some few lines in his plays, and occasionally a whole passage, that reaches the verge of pathos ; but you are conscious that it is not real, and that what is real in him, and paramount, is sarcasm, scorn, logic, and wit. In his *Lines on Oldham* he strikes the key-note of his genius, and discovers in the scathing satires of his friend the true reflection of his own best qualities.

Some poets inaugurate an epoch, others spring from it. Dryden belonged to the former class ; and effected in his day a greater revolution in English poetry than it experienced before, or can ever, probably, be susceptible of again. It is difficult to estimate now the magnitude or importance of the change. Before his time, poetry had not settled into form, and its language was obscure and affected. He was the first to apply it to the uses of satire and every-day life ; and to simplify, strengthen, and enlarge its expression. The fantastical conceits, and involved casuistry of the metaphysical poets faded before the broad light of his genius, and he established in their place a poetry massive and clear, grand and noble in the utterance, and thoroughly national in its spirit and in the integrity of its diction. Although he cannot be said to have been the first to improve our versification—for Sandys and Fairfax were before him, and amongst the Elizabethan poets many examples of rhythmical and metrical excellence existed—he carried it farther than all his predecessors, and left it perfect. “ I learned versification wholly from Dryden’s works,” says Pope ; “ who had improved it much beyond any of our former poets ; and would, probably, have brought it to perfection, had not he been unhappily obliged to write so often in haste.” The injustice of this grudging testimony need scarcely be pointed out. Pope believed that he had consummated the work of art which Dryden was too much pressed by his necessities to complete ; but a comparison between the smooth monotony and exquisite mechanism of the one, and the full tide and rich varieties of the other, instinct with a music to which Pope’s ear was insensible, restores to the master the honour which his disciple indirectly claims for himself.

One of the greatest merits of Dryden lies in his diction. Coleridge, in his *Lectures on Shakespeare*, justly claims for the writers of the Elizabethan period the distinction of having employed the purest idiom of our language. ‘It is the existence,’ he observes, ‘of an individual idiom that makes the principal writers before the Restoration the great patterns or integers of English style. In them the precise intended meaning of a word can never be mistaken; whereas in the latter writers, as especially in Pope, the use of words is for the most part purely arbitrary, so that the context will rarely show the true specific sense, but only that something of the sort is designed. A perusal of the authorities cited by Johnson, in his *Dictionary*, under any leading word, will give you a lively sense of this declension in etymological truth of expression in the writers after the Restoration, or, perhaps, strictly after the middle of the reign of Charles II.’\* Dryden represents the English style here alluded to, at the height of its familiar development, avoiding what was antiquated or pedantic in his predecessors, and observing in the treatment of a lower range of subjects that idiomatic purity which they exhibited in the higher walks of poetry. Pope, who more than any other writer frittered away the substance and original integrity of words, nevertheless recognised in Dryden the quality of fitness, the only aspect in which the soundness of Dryden’s diction appears to have struck him. ‘Dryden,’ he says, ‘always uses proper language; lively, natural, and fitted to the subject. It is scarce ever too high, or too low; never, perhaps, except in his Plays.’ The careful student of Dryden will discover not only that he always uses the right word in the right place; but that he never uses it in an ambiguous sense, and that he strictly confines himself to the forms and resources of his own language.

Of all English poets, Dryden, perhaps, is the most English. He is as emphatically Saxon as Pope is conspicuously French. He resisted all innovations, yet he has not escaped the charge

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\* *Lectures on Shakespeare.*

of being an innovator; and the only two French words he has admitted into his poems have been cited to sustain it. As a prose writer, the Saxon flavour of his language is as strong as his matter is full and weighty. His style is everywhere fluent, masterly, and idiomatic. His criticisms were the first systematic treatises of that nature which possess the slightest claims to originality; and although they exhibit some remarkable heresies, they still remain models of vigour and breadth of handling. The same boldness and largeness of conception marked everything he undertook. Even his errors of judgment were on a scale of grandeur that invests them with interest. To remodel Shakspeare and turn Milton into rhyme, were not the projects of an ordinary mind; and if he failed in the execution of these designs, there was a waste of splendour in the failure that makes its example illustrious. It has been well observed, that what was said of Rome, adorned by Augustus, might be applied, by an easy metaphor, to English Poetry, improved by Dryden: He found it brick, and left it marble. This is a true image of what Dryden did for our Literature. The Poetry he found in the grave days before the Restoration was a curious mixture of cobweb fancies and tawdry spangles; for the age of the Puritans was an age of contradictions, of serious aims and heroic actions, seeking expression through a decorated style and an ecstatic vocabulary. The Poetry he left is solid and enduring; no fluctuations of taste can impair its influence; and no changes in our language can render it obsolete.

## PORTRAITS.

MR. MALONE has given the fullest account he could procure of the authentic portraits of Dryden; to which I am enabled to add some further particulars from information supplied to me by Charles Beville Dryden, Esq.

The earliest portrait known is that in the Picture Gallery at Oxford. Mr. Malone is in error in stating that this picture is dated 1655. The year 1655\* is written in ink on the back. The costume is subsequent to the Restoration, and in the engraving of it in his book Mr. Malone assumes the date as 1664, about which time, or rather later, it was probably painted. The inkstand, book, and branch of laurel in Malone's engraving are interpolations. The portrait is in an oval frame, but there is no doubt that it was originally square—three-quarter size. There is now another portrait of Dryden at Oxford, in the Bodleian, said to be by Kneller. It appears, however, to be only a copy of the portrait, No. 3, in Malone's engraving.

Kneller painted several portraits of Dryden. The finest is that painted for Jacob Tonson, the original of Edelinck's engraving, from which nearly all the prints have been copied. It is in grey hair, and about the date of 1698. It is still, as in Malone's time, in the possession of the Baker family at Bayfordbury Hall, Hertfordshire. Another portrait by Kneller, also without a wig, was in the possession of the Earl of Oxford. This was the picture engraved by Vertue in 1730, and by Houbraken in 1743. The Earl's property has been long since sold, and where this picture is at present is unknown. A third portrait by Kneller was that which was presented by the poet to his kinsman, John Driden, of Chesterton, a half-length, finely painted, representing Dryden in a wig, with a sprig of laurel in his left hand. Malone tells us that this portrait remained at Chesterton till about 1777, when the estate was sold by the Pigott family to Mr. Waller; that the portrait was then removed; and that the owner of it, Mrs. Frances Pigott, was unable to discover into whose hands it had fallen. Subsequent inquiries have been equally unsuccessful; but they have led to the discovery of a very clever original pencil portrait, taken by T. Forster, in 1697, and now in the possession of the Rev. John Dryden Pigott, of Edgmond Rectory, near Newport, Salop. This portrait, 4 inches in length, by  $3\frac{3}{4}$  in breadth, is a good, characteristic head, full of spirit in drawing and expression. It is endorsed at the top with the date of the poet's birth and death, followed by the opening triplet from *Cymon and Iphigenia*, under which is written the poet's name and age, the name of the artist, and the

\* It is extremely likely that 1655 is a clerical error, and that it ought to be 1665.

date of the drawing. At one side are inscribed the words, ‘Purchased by my Father, Anno 1730, from Dryden’s sister;’ and at the bottom, ‘In the possession of Thomas Grignon, 1792.’

Mr. Malone mentions another portrait by Kneller, in the possession of Mr. Sneyd, of Kiel, in Staffordshire, one of whose ancestors married a daughter of Sir John Driden in 1666, at which time the portrait was said to have been brought from Canons-Ashby; but as Kneller did not come to England till 1674, it must have been of a later date.

The remaining portraits mentioned by Malone are, a portrait by an unknown painter, for which an engraving was made for the *Luctus Britannici*, of which no trace has been discovered;—a portrait by Riley, in 1683, in the possession of Mr. Bromley, of Baginton Hall, Warwickshire;—another by Closterman, about 1690;—another, by an unknown artist, which formerly belonged to Addison, and afterwards became the property of Lord Bradford;—a small whole-length by Maubert, in the possession of Horace Walpole, its present possessor unknown;—and a head by Fab. Steele, belonging to the Rev. Mr. Cruttwell; whether an original or a copy Mr. Malone could not ascertain.

To this list may now be added a fine portrait by Kneller, in the possession of Charles Beville Dryden, Esq., at his residence in Cambridge Terrace, Hyde Park. This picture is a half-length, in a court costume of French grey silk, with gold ornamental studs instead of buttons, laced cravat, and plain ruffles at the wrist, a wig and sword, and a wreath of laurel in the left hand. The likeness is similar to those by Kneller and Closterman, which latter it more particularly resembles, but is evidently of an earlier date.

Mr. Malone also mentions a crayon drawing, which had long remained at the mansion of Sir Gilbert Pickering, at Tichmarsh, and was sold with the furniture of the house, about 1780. It was esteemed a strong likeness by the Pickering family. Mr. Malone adds that it was marked with the initials of the artist, J. P., and that it was then in the possession of William Walcot, jun., Esq., of Oundle. From inquiries recently made at Oundle, no such drawing can be traced. Mr. Walcot died in 1826, when the property passed into the hands of the Rev. Henry A. Simeoe, who had all the family pictures removed to his residence, but the crayon was not amongst them. Circumstances, however, satisfactorily identify this drawing with one of two crayons, answering in all respects to Malone’s description, now in the possession of Sir Henry E. L. Dryden at Canons-Ashby. One of these drawings is a portrait of Mrs. Creed, who erected the monument to Dryden’s memory at Tichmarsh; and the other is a portrait of the poet. The initials on the latter are P. L., and those on the former J. P., the same as those stated by Malone, apparently in mistake, as being on Dryden’s portrait. These drawings are undoubtedly originals, and were intended as companion portraits.

P O E M S  
OF  
J O H N   D R Y D E N .

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U P O N   T H E   D E A T H   O F   L O R D   H A S T I N G S .

[LORD HASTINGS, descended from the Hastings who was beheaded in the Tower in 1483, by the Protector Gloucester, was the eldest son of Ferdinando, sixth Earl of Huntingdon. He died in his twentieth year, of small pox, which was certainly never so glorified before; the pustules thrown out by the disease being first represented as sprouting like rosebuds, then as pimples with tears in them, next as gems sent to adorn the skin, and finally as a constellation of stars.\* Lord Hastings died on the eve of his marriage. The lady's father was Sir Theodore Mayerne, a physician of eminence, whose skill was exerted in vain to save his intended son-in-law. No less than ninety-eight Elegies, of which this was one, were dedicated to his memory, under the title of 'Lachrymæ Musarum.' The British Muses were not so copious in their tears for Dryden himself. The *Luctus Britannici* contained only seventy-nine pages of verse.

With the exception of some school exercises, including the translation of the third satire of Persius, revised and published many years afterwards, this elegy is the first known

\* All Dryden's critics, from Johnson to Scott, notice this unlucky passage with censure; and the latter compares it to Bishop Corbett's invective against the small-pox. There is no resemblance, however, between them. Corbett's lines, so far from being turgid or affected, describe plainly and coarsely enough the ravages of a disease whose fatal assaults on people of quality furnished a constant theme for the poets. A curious volume of verses on this subject might be collected from the poetry of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Amongst a variety of such productions, there is a piece of William Cartwright's

production of Dryden's. It was written in his seventeenth year, and is full of the faults of youth and the conceits of the day. The defects of the versification are obvious, and the false glitter and clustering of images are in the height of the prevailing taste. But the poem is interesting as the starting point of an original genius, who soon cast off his juvenile models, and established a school of his own.]

MUST noble Hastings immaturely die,  
 The honour of his ancient family,  
 Beauty and learning thus together meet,  
 To bring a winding for a wedding-sheet ?  
 Must virtue prove death's harbinger ? must she,  
 With him expiring, feel mortality ?  
 Is death, sin's wages, grace's now ? shall art  
 Make us more learned, only to depart ?  
 If merit be disease ; if virtue death ;  
 To be good, not to be ; who'd then bequeath  
 Himself to discipline ? who'd not esteem  
 Labour a crime ? study self-murder deem ?  
 Our noble youth now have pretence to be  
 Dunces securely, ignorant healthfully.  
 Rare linguist, whose worth speaks itself, whose praise,  
 Though not his own, all tongues besides do raise :  
 Than whom great Alexander may seem less,  
 Who conquered men, but not their languages.  
 In his mouth nations spake ; his tongue might be  
 Interpreter to Greece, France, Italy.  
 His native soil was the four parts o' the earth ;  
 All Europe was too narrow for his birth.

---

(1633) on His Majesty's Recovery from the Small-Pox, which has a conceit quite as preposterous as the rosebuds and gems of Dryden. Cartwright declares that after-ages could never conceive the king to be 'so frail as to receive such a disease,' and proposes that its name should be altered, and that they should call the pustules 'small stars fixed in a milky way,' or 'faithful turquoises' sent by Heaven as an indication of illness,

to tell  
 By their pale looks the bearer was not well !

A young apostle ; and—with reverence may  
I speak it—inspired with gift of tongues, as they.  
Nature gave him, a child, what men in vain  
Oft strive, by art though furthered, to obtain.  
His body was an orb, his sublime soul  
Did move on virtue's, and on learning's pole :  
Whose regular motions better to our view,  
Than Archimedes' sphere, the heavens did show.  
Graces and virtues, languages and arts,  
Beauty and learning, filled up all the parts.  
Heaven's gifts, which do like falling stars appear  
Scattered in others, all, as in their sphere,  
Were fixed, conglobate in his soul, and thence  
Shone through his body, with sweet influence ;  
Letting their glories so on each limb fall,  
The whole frame rendered was celestial.  
Come, learned Ptolemy, and trial make,  
If thou this hero's altitude canst take :  
But that transcends thy skill ; thrice happy all,  
Could we but prove thus astronomical.  
Lived Tycho now, struck with this ray which shone  
More bright in the morn, than others beam at noon,  
He'd take his astrolabe, and seek out here  
What new star 'twas did gild our hemisphere.  
Replenished then with such rare gifts as these,  
Where was room left for such a foul disease ?  
The nation's sin hath drawn that veil, which shrouds  
Our day-spring in so sad benighting clouds.  
Heaven would no longer trust its pledge, but thus  
Recalled it, rapt its Ganymede from us.  
Was there no milder way but the small-pox,  
The very filthiness of Pandora's box ?  
So many spots, like næves on Venus' soil,  
One jewel set off with so many a foil ; [sprout  
Blisters with pride swelled, which through's flesh did  
Like rosebuds, stuck in the lily-skin about.  
Each little pimple had a tear in it,  
To wail the fault its rising did commit ;

Which, rebel-like, with its own lord at strife,  
 Thus made an insurrection 'gainst his life.  
 Or were these gems sent to adorn his skin,  
 The cabinet of a richer soul within ?  
 No comet need foretell his change drew on,  
 Whose corpse might seem a constellation.  
 O, had he died of old, how great a strife  
 Had been, who from his death should draw their life ;  
 Who should, by one rich draught, become whate'er  
 Seneca, Cato, Numa, Cæsar, were !  
 Learned, virtuous, pious, great ; and have by this  
 An universal metempsychosis.  
 Must all these aged sires in one funeral  
 Expire ? all die in one so young, so small ?  
 Who, had he lived his life out, his great fame  
 Had swollen 'bove any Greek or Roman name.  
 But hasty winter, with one blast, hath brought  
 The hopes of autumn, summer, spring, to nought.  
 Thus fades the oak i' th' sprig, i' th' blade the corn ;  
 Thus without young, this Phœnix dies, new-born.  
 Must then old three-legged grey-beards with their gout,  
 Catarrhs, rheums, aches, live three ages out ?  
 Time's offals, only fit for the hospital !  
 Or to hang antiquaries' rooms withal !  
 Must drunkards, lechers, spent with sinning, live  
 With such helps as broths, possets, physic give ?  
 None live, but such as should die ? shall we meet  
 With none but ghostly fathers in the street ?  
 Grief makes me rail, sorrow will force its way,  
 And showers of tears tempestuous sighs best lay.  
 The tongue may fail ; but overflowing eyes  
 Will weep out lasting streams of elegies.  
 But thou, O virgin widow, left alone,  
 Now thy beloved, heaven-ravished spouse is gone,  
 Whose skilful sire in vain strove to apply  
 Medicines, when thy balm was no remedy ;  
 With greater than Platonic love, O wed  
 His soul, though not his body, to thy bed :

Let that make thee a mother ; bring thou forth  
 The ideas of his virtue, knowledge, worth ;  
 Transcribe the original in new copies ; give  
 Hastings o' th' better part : so shall he live  
 In 's nobler half ; and the great grandsire be  
 Of an heroic divine progeny :  
 An issue which to eternity shall last,  
 Yet but the irradiations which he cast.  
 Erect no mausoleums ; for his best  
 Monument is his spouse's marble breast.

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TO JOHN HODDESDEN ON HIS DIVINE  
 EPIGRAMS.

[THE title of the work to which these verses were prefixed—*Sion and Parnassus ; or, Epigrams on several Texts of the Old and New Testament*—sufficiently indicates its character. It was the fashion to mix up the Pagan Mythology with Scriptural disquisitions, or, as Dryden expresses it, to mingle ‘diviner streams with Helicon ;’ a fashion of which, in the full maturity of his fame, Dryden himself has bequeathed the most memorable examples. Mr. Hoddesden’s book was published in 1650, and the complimentary verses were written when Dryden was eighteen. They are remarkably artificial, and crowded with tropes involved in inextricable confusion. Mr. Hoddesden is compared to a young eaglet that looks the sun in the face before the down has begun to peep upon its chin ; and is immediately afterwards advanced to a place in the calendar. Dryden’s admiration of Mr. Hoddesden’s scriptural studies gives us a clue to the principles he held at this time.]

THOU hast inspired me with thy soul, and I,  
 T Who ne'er before could ken of poetry,  
 Am grown so good proficient, I can lend  
 A line in commendation of my friend.

Yet 'tis but of the second hand ; if ought  
There be in this, 'tis from thy fancy brought.  
Good thief who dar'st, Prometheus-like, aspire,  
And fill thy poems with celestial fire ;  
Enlivened by these sparks divine, their rays  
Add a bright lustre to thy crown of bays.  
Young eaglet, who thy nest thus soon forsook,  
So lofty and divine a course hast took,  
As all admire, before the down begin  
To peep, as yet, upon thy smoother chin ;  
And, making heaven thy aim, hast had the grace  
To look the Sun of Righteousness i' the face.  
What may we hope, if thou goest on thus fast ?  
Scriptures at first, enthusiasms at last !  
Thou hast commenced, betimes, a saint ; go on,  
Mingling diviner streams with Helicon,  
That they who view what epigrams here be,  
May learn to make like, in just praise of thee.  
Reader, I've done, nor longer will withhold  
Thy greedy eyes ; looking on this pure gold,  
Thou'l know adulterate copper ; which, like this,  
Will only serve to be a foil to his.

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### HEROIC STANZAS ON THE DEATH OF OLIVER CROMWELL.

Written after his Funeral.

[ONE of the numerous tributes paid to the memory of the Protector, of which those by Sprat and Waller alone have escaped oblivion, or probably deserved to escape it. Scott considers Waller's poem superior to Dryden's; but most readers will be disposed to reverse that judgment. In the selection of topics, and largeness of treatment, the superiority of Dryden is manifest. This was the poem that first brought him into notice. It was published singly in 1659, and re-published in the same year with the verses of Sprat and

Waller. It touches on most of the principal events of Cromwell's career, the civil war, domestic policy, and foreign alliances, bestowing all throughout unbounded praise on the wisdom and capacity of the Protector. In the two poems that immediately follow, the Muse renders a no less elaborate homage to Charles II. This change of views furnishes the staple of one of the many charges which hunted Dryden through life. But it was a charge to which the whole nation was equally obnoxious, and in which the leaders of the Puritan party were themselves the most deeply implicated. Scott, who cannot be suspected of concurring without good reason in a panegyric on Cromwell, commends the justice with which Dryden has chosen the subjects of praise, and says that they are generally such as Cromwell's worst enemies could not have denied to him. He adds, to the credit of Dryden's good taste, that he had not made the errors or misfortunes of the royal family, or their followers, the subject of censure or of contrast, and that it was hardly possible an eulogy on such a theme could have less offence in it.]

## I

**A**ND now 'tis time ; for their officious haste,  
Who would before have borne him to the sky,  
Like eager Romans, ere all rites were past,  
Did let too soon the sacred eagle fly.\*

## 2

Though our best notes are treason to his fame,  
Joined with the loud applause of public voice ;  
Since heaven, what praise we offer to his name,  
Hath rendered too authentic by its choice.

## 3

Though in his praise no arts can liberal be,  
Since they, whose muses have the highest flown,  
Add not to his immortal memory,  
But do an act of friendship to their own :

---

\* Alluding to the Roman custom of letting an eagle fly from the funeral pile of a deceased emperor.

## 4

Yet 'tis our duty, and our interest too,  
 Such monuments as we can build to raise ;  
 Lest all the world prevent what we should do,  
 And claim a title in him by their praise.

## 5

How shall I then begin, or where conclude,  
 To draw a fame so truly circular ? \*  
 For in a round, what order can be shewed,  
 Where all the parts so equal perfect are ?

## 6

His grandeur he derived from heaven alone ;  
 For he was great, ere fortune made him so ;  
 And wars, like mists that rise against the sun,  
 Made him but greater seem, not greater grow.

## 7

No borrowed bays his temples did adorn,  
 But to our crown he did fresh jewels bring ;  
 Nor was his virtue poisoned soon as born,  
 With the too early thoughts of being king.

## 8

Fortune, (that easy mistress to the young,  
 But to her ancient servants coy and hard,)  
 Him at that age her favourites ranked among,  
 When she her best-loved Pompey did discard.

## 9

He, private, marked the faults of others' sway,  
 And set as sea-marks for himself to shun ;  
 Not like rash monarchs, who their youth betray  
 By acts their age too late would wish undone.

## 10

And yet dominion was not his design ;  
 We owe that blessing, not to him, but heaven,

\* A circular fame touches the verge of burlesque. In Dryden the thought is so eager to escape that it does not always wait to choose the most critical expression. The figure is a conceit; but it is, nevertheless, full of force and meaning. A circular fame condenses into a word the image of a fame that clasps the whole globe.

Which to fair acts unsought rewards did join;  
 Rewards, that less to him, than us, were given.

## II

Our former chiefs, like sticklers of the war,  
 First sought to inflame the parties, then to poise:  
 The quarrel loved, but did the cause abhor ;  
 And did not strike to hurt, but make a noise.

## I 2

War, our consumption, was their gainful trade ;  
 We inward bled, whilst they prolonged our pain ;  
 He fought to end our fighting, and essayed  
 To staunch the blood by breathing of the vein.\*

## I 3

Swift and resistless through the land he past,  
 Like that bold Greek, who did the East subdue ;  
 And made to battles such heroic haste,  
 As if on wings of victory he flew.

## I 4

He fought, secure of fortune as of fame,  
 Till by new maps, the island might be shewn,  
 Of conquests, which he strewed where'er he came,  
 Thick as the galaxy with stars is sown.†

## I 5

His palms, though under weights they did not stand,‡  
 Still thrived; no winter could his laurels fade :  
 Heaven in his portrait shewed a workman's hand,  
 And drew it perfect, yet without a shade.

\* In this line Dryden was accused of insinuating a vindication of the execution of Charles I. Of the justice, or injustice, of this imputation, every reader will judge for himself.

† This description might be applied with greater justice to Fairfax, whose rapid marches embraced a wider field of action, and who may be said, more truly than Cromwell, to have strewn the island with conquests.

‡ It was anciently a popular notion that the palm-tree thrives best when pressed down by weights.—SCOTT.

## 16

Peace was the prize of all his toil and care,  
 Which war had banished, and did now restore :  
 Bologna's walls thus mounted in the air,  
 To seat themselves more surely than before.\*

## 17

Her safety rescued Ireland to him owes ;†  
 And treacherous Scotland, to no interest true,  
 Yet blest that fate which did his arms dispose  
 Her land to civilize, as to subdue.‡

## 18

Nor was he like those stars which only shine,  
 When to pale mariners they storms portend :  
 He had his calmer influence, and his mien  
 Did love and majesty together blend.

## 19

'Tis true, his countenance did imprint an awe;  
 And naturally all souls to his did bow ;  
 As wands of divination downward draw,  
 And point to beds where sovereign gold doth grow.§

\* At the siege of Bologna, in 1512, a mine was said to have exploded, and blown up part of the wall of a church, which immediately fell back again into its place. Though it was carried so high, we are told, that both armies could see one another through the breach, yet it fell again exactly into its place, so that it was impossible to see where it had been separated. The miracle was explained by the presence of an image of the Virgin standing on the top of the wall, which image, though it could not prevent the wall from being blown up, yet possessed the curious power of restoring it instantaneously to its original position ! The introduction of such an illustration, with at least the appearance of a poetical faith in it, is not a little remarkable in a panegyric on Cromwell, especially as Dryden (who is said by Derrick and others to have been bred an Anabaptist) had not yet become a convert to Romanism.

† Irish history gives a different version of Cromwell's wars in that country. The curse of Cromwell is a common anathema on the lips of the peasantry.

‡ Scotland is here called treacherous, because, having been the first to take up arms against Charles I., she was the last to lay them down on behalf of his son.—SCOTT.

§ The rod of divination was a forked hazel, which, being poised on the back of the hand, and so carried with great caution, inclined itself sympathetically to the earth, where mines or hidden treasures lay concealed beneath the surface.—SCOTT.

20

When past all offerings to Feretrian Jove,  
 He Mars deposed, and arms to gowns made yield;  
 Successful councils did him soon approve  
 As fit for close intrigues, as open field.

21

To suppliant Holland he vouchsafed a peace,  
 Our once bold rival of the British main;  
 Now tamely glad her unjust claim to cease,  
 And buy our friendship with her idol, gain.

22

Fame of the asserted sea, through Europe blown,  
 Made France and Spain ambitious of his love;  
 Each knew that side must conquer he would own,  
 And for him fiercely, as for empire, strove.

23

No sooner was the Frenchman's cause embraced,  
 Than the light Monsieur the grave Don outweighed:  
 His fortune turned the scale where'er 'twas cast,  
 Though Indian mines were in the other laid.

24

When absent, yet we conquered in his right:  
 For, though some meaner artist's skill were shown,  
 In mingling colours, or in placing light,  
 Yet still the fair designment was his own.

25

For, from all tempers he could service draw;  
 The worth of each, with its alloy, he knew;  
 And, as the confidant of nature, saw  
 How she complexions did divide and brew.

26

Or he their single virtues did survey,  
 By intuition, in his own large breast;  
 Where all the rich ideas of them lay,  
 That were the rule and measure to the rest.

## 27

When such heroic virtue heaven sets out,  
 The stars, like commons, sullenly obey;  
 Because it drains them when it comes about,  
 And therefore is a tax they seldom pay.

## 28

From this high spring our foreign conquests flow,  
 Which yet more glorious triumphs do portend;  
 Since their commencement to his arms they owe,  
 If springs as high as fountains may ascend.

## 29

He made us freemen of the continent,  
 Whom nature did like captives treat before ;  
 To nobler preys the English lion sent,  
 And taught him first in Belgian walks to roar.

## 30

That old unquestioned pirate of the land,  
 Proud Rome, with dread the fate of Dunkirk heard;\*  
 And, trembling, wished behind more Alps to stand,  
 Although an Alexander were her guard.†

## 31

By his command we boldly crossed the line,  
 And bravely fought where southern stars arise;  
 We traced the far-fetched gold unto the mine,  
 And that, which bribed our fathers, made our prize.

## 32

Such was our prince ; yet owned a soul above  
 The highest acts it could produce to show :

\* Amongst the vicissitudes Dunkirk underwent in the 16th and 17th centuries, through the alternate successes of the Spaniards, French, and English, it came into the possession of England in 1658. It was afterwards sold to Louis XIV. on the plea of economy, but really to feed the extravagance of Charles II.

+ Pope Alexander VII., mistaken by the last editor of Dryden for Alexander VI., who died upwards of a century and a half before. Dryden plays upon the name, referring to Alexander the Great, previously alluded to in stanza 13 as

'The bold Greek, who did the East subdue.'

Thus, poor mechanic arts in public move,  
Whilst the deep secrets beyond practice go.

## 33

Nor died he when his ebbing fame went less,  
But when fresh laurels courted him to live :  
He seemed but to prevent some new success,  
As if above what triumphs earth could give.

## 34

His latest victories still thickest came,  
As near the centre motion doth increase;  
Till he, pressed down by his own weighty name,  
Did, like the vestal, under spoils decease.\*

## 35

But first the ocean as a tribute sent  
The giant prince of all her watery herd;  
And the isle, when her protecting genius went,  
Upon his obsequies loud sighs conferred.†

## 36

No civil broils have since his death arose,  
But faction now by habit does obey;  
And wars have that respect for his repose,  
As winds for halcyons, when they breed at sea.‡

\* Dryden is not as felicitous as usual in the comparison between the fate of Cromwell and that of Tarpeia, who, betraying the citadel to the Sabines on the promise of a bribe, was smothered under their bucklers.

† On the day of Cromwell's death a hurricane burst over the country, inflicting considerable damage by land and sea. Waller also notices the circumstance, and makes a highly poetical use of it :—

‘ Heaven his great soul does claim,  
In storms as loud as his immortal fame.’

‡ Poetical licence here takes a very questionable liberty with natural history in making the winds so complaisant to the halcyon. It was not that the winds respected the breeding-time of the haleyon, or *alcedo*, supposed to be the kingfisher, but that the instinct of the bird led it to select for incubation the seven days that precede and follow the winter solstice, when the weather is generally calm. Hence the

His ashes in a peaceful urn shall rest ; \*

His name a great example stands, to show,  
How strangely high endeavours may be blessed,  
Where piety and valour jointly go.

phrase of the ancients ‘halcyon days.’ The circumstance is thus alluded to by Ovid :—

‘ Perque dies placidos hiberno tempore septem  
Incubat Halcyone pendentibus æquore nidis.  
Tum via tuta maris : ventos custodit et arcet  
Æolus egressu : præstatque nepotibus æquor.’

\* Not very long after the publication of this apostrophe to the repose of Cromwell’s ashes, the body of the Protector was dragged from the royal vault and hung upon the felon’s gibbet, and his head publicly exposed at Westminster Hall. The circumstance is attested in the Diary of an Eye-witness, Dr. William Taswell, rector of Newington and St. Mary, Bermondsey, in Surrey, who (at that time being between seven and eight years old) states that about nine o’clock on the 30th of January, 1660-1, he saw ‘the bodies of Cromwell, Bradshaw, and Ireton, not long before taken out of the royal depository at Westminster, exposed upon Tyburn gallows.’—*Camden Miscellany*, vol. ii.; *Autobiography and Anecdotes* by William Taswell, D.D., p. 6. The order for this expiatory spectacle was issued by both houses of parliament on the 8th of the preceding December, and included, in addition to the three above mentioned, the body of Thomas Pride, which was not, however, exhibited at Tyburn.

[With reference to this poem, and the contemporary eulogies on Cromwell, Dr. J. Wharton makes the following observations :

‘ We are not to wonder that Dryden, after this panegyric on Cromwell, should live to be appointed poet laureate to Charles II., any more than that Dr. Sprat, after a similar panegyric, should live to write the *History of the Rye-House Plot*, and become Bishop of Rochester. Men were dazzled with the uncommon talents of the Protector, ‘who wanted nothing to raise him to heroic excellence, but virtue;’ they were struck with his intrepidity,—his industry,—his insight into all characters,—his secrecy in his projects, and his successes beyond all hope and expectation, in the course of human affairs. The most manly and nervous of all Waller’s poems are the stanzas to Cromwell, which are far superior to the poem on his death (though that excels this of Dryden), and on the war with Spain. It is observable, that Milton never addressed any poem to Cromwell, but only one admirable sonnet, in which, not like a mean flatterer, he assumes the tone of an adviser, and cautions him against the avarice and the encroachments of the Presbyterian clergy, whom he calls ‘hireling wolves.’ The University of Oxford, notwithstanding its ancient loyalty, sent him a volume of Latin verses, on his making peace with the Dutch, in which collection are to be found the names of *Crew, Mew, Godolphin, South, Locke, and Busby!*’]

## ASTRÆA REDUX.

A POEM ON THE HAPPY RESTORATION AND RETURN OF HIS SACRED  
MAJESTY CHARLES THE SECOND. 1660.

[IN this poem, as its title implies, Dryden celebrates the advent of the Restoration. The picture it presents of the afflicted state of England under the interregnum offers a startling contrast to the picture drawn of the same period in the preceding poem, written only two years before. If Dryden be entitled to credit for the forbearance with which he abstained from casting reflections upon the Stuarts in his lines on Cromwell, the same praise certainly cannot be accorded to him for sparing the memory of the Protectorate in his offering to Charles. The circumstances under which these pieces were written render this difference of treatment the more remarkable. In the one case there was at least a chance (Sprat alone was rash enough to predict otherwise) of the return of the royal family; in the other case, there was nothing more to be hoped or feared from the descendants or adherents of the Protector. This consideration may not have influenced the poet, but the reader can hardly avoid being affected by it, when he finds that almost every topic which in the former poem was referred to as a subject of panegyric is here made a ground of reproach or lamentation. England is described as having been isolated from the policy of Europe, church and state as groaning for the return of the king, with fanaticism in the pulpit, and faction on the throne; even peace, which had been extolled as the great work of the Protector, becomes a ‘dreadful quiet,’ and ‘horrid stillness,’ and the treaty which followed speedily on the death of Cromwell, between France and Spain, is cited as evidence that Providence had abandoned the kingdom. Whether the revolution which took place in Dryden’s opinions on these subjects can be considered open to the same mistrust which has been, justly or unjustly, attached to his religious inconstancy,

may, however, be doubted, for it does not appear that he reaped any immediate advantages, although he might have expected them, from his political conversion. The fairest construction, perhaps, as it is the most indulgent, to be put upon his conduct, is that which is supplied by Dr. Johnson—‘If he changed, he changed with the nation.’

The poem abounds in conceits and mythological allusions. Dryden had not yet emancipated himself from the old examples. But a comparison between this and his first production in the same measure, will show how early he appeared as a reformer of English versification.]

Jam reddit et virgo, redeunt Saturnia regna.—VIRG.

The last great age, foretold by sacred rhimes,  
Renews its finished course; Saturnian times  
Roll round again.

NOW with a general peace the world was blest,  
While ours, a world divided from the rest,  
A dreadful quiet felt, and worser far  
Than arms, a sullen interval of war.  
Thus when black clouds draw down the laboring skies,  
Ere yet abroad the winged thunder flies,  
An horrid stillness first invades the ear,  
And in that silence we the tempest fear.\*

\* This couplet brought down the ridicule of a fry of small wits, who jeered at the notion of silence invading the ear. One of these mongrel satirists, in *A Dialogue in Bedlam*, makes the ‘horrid silence’ invade his eye, so that his voice becomes invisible. Dr. Johnson thought it worth while to vindicate the image by the analogous cases of darkness and cold. ‘No man,’ says Johnson, ‘scruples to say that darkness hinders him from his work; or that cold kills the plants.’ This defence was unnecessary. It is the undisputed privilege, not merely of poetry, but of the language of common life, to invest all qualities with active and positive powers. So far from being objectionable on any ground of taste or usage, the image of the invading silence that precedes the tempest is both accurate and grand. Shakspeare makes even a bolder and more palpable use of the figure:—

But Silence, like a Lucrece knife,  
With bloodless strokes my heart doth gore.

*Twelfth Night.*

See also Milton, *Paradise Lost*, b. iv., l. 604.

The ambitious Swede,\* like restless billows tost,  
 On this hand gaining what on that he lost,  
 Though in his life he blood and ruin breathed,  
 To his now guideless kingdom peace bequeathed;  
 And heaven, that seemed regardless of our fate,  
 For France and Spain did miracles create;  
 Such mortal quarrels to compose in peace,  
 As nature bred, and interest did increase.  
 We sighed to hear the fair Iberian bride  
 Must grow a lily to the lily's side;  
 Whilst our cross stars denied us Charles hist bed,†  
 Whom our first flames and virgin love did wed.  
 For his long absence church and state did groan;  
 Madness the pulpit, faction seized the throne:  
 Experienced age in deep despair was lost,  
 To see the rebel thrive, the loyal crost:  
 Youth, that with joys had unacquainted been,  
 Envied gray hairs, that once good days had seen:  
 We thought our sires, not with their own content,  
 Had, ere we came to age, our portion spent.  
 Nor could our nobles hope their bold attempt,  
 Who ruined crowns, would coronets exempt:  
 For when, by their designing leaders taught  
 To strike at power, which for themselves they sought,  
 The vulgar, gulled into rebellion, armed;  
 Their blood to action by the prize was warmed.  
 The sacred purple, then, and scarlet gown,  
 Like sanguine dye, to elephants, was shown.  
 Thus, when the bold Typhœus scaled the sky,§  
 And forced great Jove from his own heaven to fly,

\* Charles X., nephew to Gustavus Adolphus. † Original Edition.

‡ By the treaty of peace concluded between France and Spain after the death of Cromwell, the Infanta was betrothed to Louis XIV.

§ The giant Typhon of Ovid. The resemblance between the name of the monster and that of the typhoon, or hurricane of the southern seas, is suggestive of the possible origin of the latter. The conjecture, at all events, is worth pursuing. In the scheme of the mythology the giants were the agents or representatives of the winds. 'By the giants, says old Sandys, 'the naturalists understand the included spirits of the

(What king, what crown, from treason's reach is free,  
 If Jove and Heaven can violated be?)  
 The lesser gods, that shared his prosperous state,  
 All suffered in the exiled Thunderer's fate.  
 The rabble now such freedom did enjoy,  
 As winds at sea, that use it to destroy :  
 Blind as the Cyclop, and as wild as he,  
 They owned a lawless savage liberty,  
 Like that our painted ancestors so prized,  
 Ere empire's arts their breasts had civilized.  
 How great were then our Charles his woes, who thus  
 Was forced to suffer for himself and us !  
 He, tossed by fate, and hurried up and down,  
 Heir to his father's sorrows, with his crown,  
 Could taste no sweets of youth's desired age ;  
 But found his life too true a pilgrimage.  
 Unconquered yet in that forlorn estate,  
 His manly courage overcame his fate.  
 His wounds he took, like Romans, on his breast,  
 Which by his virtue were with laurels drest.  
 As souls reach heaven, while yet in bodies pent,  
 So did he live above his banishment.  
 That sun, which we beheld with cozened eyes  
 Within the water, moved along the skies.  
 How easy 'tis, when destiny proves kind,  
 With full-spread sails to run before the wind !  
 But those that 'gainst stiff gales laveering go,  
 Must be at once resolved, and skilful too.  
 He would not, like soft Otho, hope prevent,\*  
 But stayed, and suffered fortune to repent.

earth, of which the winds were engendered.' Typhon, after waging war against the gods, was struck by lightning, and cast down under the island of Sicily ; and his struggles to get free were supposed to produce the agitations of these volcanic regions, 'the winds,' says the same quaint writer, 'imprisoned in the bowels of the earth, and not finding a vent, being the reason of earthquakes.'

\* The allusion may be taken to refer to the Emperor Otho, who slew himself after the battle of Brixellum, uttering the memorable words, 'It is better that one man should die for all, than that all should perish for

These virtues Galba in a stranger sought,  
 And Piso to adopted empire brought.\*  
 How shall I then my doubtful thoughts express,  
 That must his sufferings both regret and bless ?  
 For, when his early valour Heaven had crost,  
 And all at Worcester but the honour lost;†  
 Forced into exile from his rightful throne,  
 He made all countries where he came his own ;  
 And, viewing monarchs' secret arts of sway,  
 A royal factor for his kingdoms lay.  
 Thus, banished David spent abroad his time,  
 When to be God's anointed was his crime ;  
 And when restored, made his proud neighbours rue  
 Those choice remarks he from his travels drew.  
 Nor is he only by afflictions shown  
 To conquer others' realms, but rule his own ;  
 Recovering hardly what he lost before,  
 His right endears it much ; his purchase more.  
 Inured to suffer ere he came to reign,  
 No rash procedure will his actions stain :  
 To business ripened by digestive thought,  
 His future rule is into method brought :  
 As they, who, first, proportion understand,  
 With easy practice reach a master's hand.  
 Well might the ancient poets then confer  
 On Night the honoured name of Counsellor;

---

one man ;' or to Otho IV., of Germany, who relinquished his throne upon his defeat at Bouvines, in 1214, and shut himself up in the Chateau of Hautzburg, where he died. The passage is applicable to both, but with greater force and more probability to the former. In either case it is not saying much for Charles, that instead of committing suicide, or renouncing his birthright, he trusted his fortune to a chapter of accidents.

\* Galba, the Roman emperor, who adopted Piso Frugi Lucianus as his successor.

† Imitated from the letters of Francis I. to his mother, after the battle of Pavia—‘ Madam, all is lost except our honour.’—SCOTT. The expression has passed into general use. Thus Moore, in his lyric ‘ After the Battle’:

‘ Oh ! who shall say what heroes feel,  
 When all but life and honour's lost ?’

Since, struck with rays of prosperous fortune blind,  
 We light alone in dark afflictions find.\*  
 In such adversities to sceptres trained,  
 The name of Great his famous grandsire gained:  
 Who yet, a king alone in name and right,  
 With hunger, cold, and angry Jove did fight;  
 Shocked by a covenanting league's vast powers,  
 As holy and as catholic as ours:  
 Till fortune's fruitless spite had made it known,  
 Her blows not shook, but riveted his throne.

Some lazy ages, lost in sleep and ease,  
 No action leave to busy chronicles :†  
 Such, whose supine felicity but makes  
 In story chasms, in epocha mistakes;  
 O'er whom Time gently shakes his wings of down,  
 Till with his silent sickle they are mown.  
 Such is not Charles' too, too active age,  
 Which, governed by the wild distempered rage  
 Of some black star, infecting all the skies,‡  
 Made him at his own cost, like Adam, wise.  
 Tremble, ye nations, which, secure before,  
 Laughed at those arms that 'gainst ourselves we bore;  
 Roused by the lash of his own stubborn tail,  
 Our lion now will foreign foes assail.  
 With alga, who the sacred altar strews ?  
 To all the sea gods Charles an offering owes:

---

\* Johnson objects to the forced conceit of these lines, and Scott calls the finding of light in dark afflictions an ‘impertinent antithesis.’ The antithesis, however, is more apparent than the impertinence; and, taking the couplet as a whole, instead of confining the figure to the last line, it has a wider application than Scott seems to have perceived. The passage is intended to illustrate the ultimate consolation of misfortune, that of drawing wisdom from adversity. The rhyme of *confer* and *counsellor* is not so easily defended.

† A specimen of the female rhyme which Dryden himself condemned: ‘Neither can we give ourselves the liberty of making any part of a verse for the sake of rhyme, or concluding with a word which is not current English, or using the variety of female rhymes, all which our fathers practised.’—*Letter to Sir R. Howard.*

‡ Dryden’s belief in astrology is frequently shewn in allusions of this kind scattered through his poems.

A bull to thee, Portunus, shall be slain,  
 A lamb to you, ye tempests of the main:/\*  
 For those loud storms, that did against him roar,  
 Have cast his shipwrecked vessel on the shore.  
 Yet, as wise artists mix their colours so,  
 That by degrees they from each other go;  
 Black steals unheeded from the neighbouring white,  
 Without offending the well-cozened sight:  
 So on us stole our blessed change; while we  
 The effect did feel, but scarce the manner see.  
 Frosts, that constrain the ground, and birth deny  
 To flowers that in its womb expecting lie,  
 Do seldom their usurping power withdraw,  
 But raging floods pursue their hasty thaw;  
 Our thaw was mild, the cold not chased away,  
 But lost in kindly heat of lengthened day.  
 Heaven would no bargain for its blessings drive,  
 But what we could not pay for, freely give.  
 The Prince of peace would, like himself, confer  
 A gift unhoped, without the price of war:

\* Comparing the restoration of Charles to an escape from shipwreck, the ancient classical sacrifices are offered up: a bull to Portunus (the Palæmon of the Greeks), and a lamb to the storms, while the altar is strewn with algæ, plants without sexual organs, which grow under water. When these plants are found in salt water they are called algæ, sea-weeds, and in fresh water, confervæ. The sudden transition from these heathen rites to the religious resource of repeated prayer,

Which stormed the skies and ravished Charles from thence, is an instance of that teeming confusion of tropes and ideas which Dr. Johnson justly censures in the subsequent passage about Monk. ‘His praise of Monk’s dexterity,’ says the critic, ‘comprises such a cluster of thoughts unallied to one another, as will not elsewhere be easily found.’ In the passage to which this observation refers we have the blessed saints leaning from their stars to watch small clues drawing ‘vastest weights’ (an expression almost involving an absurdity, vastness being associated with extent and not gravity), pencils turning tears to smiles, fancy framing chimeras to subdue them, action shunning the mint like base metal, the nervous system brought to bear upon the decisions of the judgment, and Monk’s strategy compared first to well-ripened fruit, and in the next line to the feints of an angler, after which, the whole of these heterogeneous metaphors are submitted to the digestive process.

Yet, as he knew his blessing's worth, took care,  
That we should know it by repeated prayer,  
Which stormed the skies, and ravished Charles from  
As heaven itself is took by violence. [thence,  
Booth's forward valour only served to show,\*  
He durst that duty pay, we all did owe:  
The attempt was fair; but Heaven's prefixed hour,  
Not come: so, like the watchful traveller,  
That by the moon's mistaken light did rise,  
Lay down again, and closed his weary eyes.  
'Twas Monk, whom Providence designed to loose  
Those real bonds false freedom did impose.  
The blessed saints, that watched this turning scene,  
Did from their stars with joyful wonder lean,  
To see small clues draw vastest weights along,  
Not in their bulk, but in their order strong.  
Thus, pencils can, by one slight touch restore  
Smiles to that changed face that wept before.  
With ease such fond chimæras we pursue,  
As fancy frames for fancy to subdue:  
But when ourselves to action we betake,  
It shuns the mint, like gold that chemists make.  
How hard was then his task, at once to be  
What in the body natural we see!  
Man's architect distinctly did ordain  
The charge of muscles, nerves, and of the brain,  
Through viewless conduits spirits to dispense;  
The springs of motion from the seat of sense.  
'Twas not the hasty product of a day,  
But the well-ripened fruit of wise delay.  
He, like a patient angler, ere he strook,  
Would let them play awhile upon the hook.  
Our healthful food the stomach labours thus,  
At first embracing what it straight doth crush.  
Wise leeches will not vain receipts obtrude,  
While growing pains pronounce the humours crude:

\* Sir George Booth, who, in conjunction with Sir William Middleton, made an injudicious demonstration on the royal side in 1659, and was signally defeated.

Deaf to complaints, they wait upon the ill,  
 Till some safe crisis authorize their skill.  
 Nor could his acts too close a vizard wear,  
 To 'scape their eyes whom guilt had taught to fear,  
 And guard with caution that polluted nest,  
 Whence legion twice before was dispossess:  
 One sacred house, which when they entered in,  
 They thought the place could sanctify a sin;  
 Like those that vainly hoped kind heaven would wink,  
 While to excess on martyrs' tombs they drink.  
 And, as devoutest Turks first warn their souls  
 To part, before they taste forbidden bowls,\*  
 So these, when their black crimes they went about,  
 First timely charmed their useless conscience out.  
 Religion's name against itself was made;  
 The shadow served the substance to invade:  
 Like zealous missions, they did care pretend  
 Of souls, in show, but made their gold their end.  
 The incensed powers beheld with scorn, from high,  
 An heaven so far distant from the sky,  
 Which durst, with horses' hoofs that beat the ground,  
 And martial brass, belie the thunder's sound.  
 'Twas hence, at length, just vengeance thought it fit  
 To speed their ruin by their impious wit:  
 Thus Sforza, cursed with a too fertile brain,†  
 Lost by his wiles the power his wit did gain.  
 Henceforth their fougue‡ must spend at lesser rate,  
 Than in its flames to wrap a nation's fate.  
 Suffered to live, they are like Helots set,  
 A virtuous shame within us to beget;  
 For, by example most we sinned before,  
 And, glass-like, clearness mixed with frailty bore.

\* Referring to the supposed sophistry by which the Turk silenced his conscience before he indulged in wine.

† Lewis Sforza, the usurping Duke of Milan, driven from his throne by Lewis XII. of France.

‡ *Fougue*—fury, ardour, mettle. An English word would have answered the purpose better. A similar gallicism occurs in the poem on the Coronation, where *fraicheur* is used for freshness; but importations of this kind are very rare in Dryden.

But since, reformed by what we did amiss,  
 We by our sufferings learn to prize our bliss:  
 Like early lovers, whose unpractised hearts  
 Were long the may-game of malicious arts,  
 When once they find their jealousies were vain,  
 With double heat renew their fires again.  
 'Twas this produced the joy, that hurried o'er  
 Such swarms of English to the neighbouring shore,\*  
 To fetch that prize, by which Batavia made  
 So rich amends for our impoverished trade.  
 Oh, had you seen from Schevelin's barren shore,  
 (Crowded with troops, and barren now no more,)  
 Afflicted Holland to his farewell bring  
 True sorrow, Holland to regret a king!  
 While waiting him his royal fleet did ride,  
 And willing winds to their lowered sails denied.  
 The wavering streamers, flags, and standards out,  
 The merry seamen's rude but cheerful shout;  
 And last the cannons' voice that shook the skies,  
 And, as it fares in sudden ecstasies,  
 At once bereft us both of ears and eyes.  
 The Naseby, now no longer England's shame,†  
 But better to be lost in Charles's name,

---

\* 'Breda,' says Clarendon, 'swarmed with English.' The commissioners appointed to wait upon the king at Breda, and attend him to England, consisted chiefly of men who had distinguished themselves against the royal cause, with Fairfax at their head, and Denzil Holles as spokesman. Dryden cannot be reasonably condemned for embracing a course sanctioned by such authority, and sustained by the voice of the country; but this consideration does not relieve him from the inconsistency of aspersing under the new order of things the men and the system he had applauded under the old.

† The name of the ship Naseby, that conveyed the king to England, was changed to the Charles. The ceremony of changing the names of the ships took place after dinner, on board the vessel in which Pepys embarked for Holland with Lord Sandwich, the new names being given by the King and the Duke of York. In the same spirit all memorials likely to offend the monarch were industriously destroyed in England; the Irish harp was struck out of the flags to please his majesty, old signs over shops were displaced by the royal arms, and the Commonwealth flags were everywhere torn down, and the king's substituted. 'To the quarter-deck,' says Pepys, on his way to Holland, 'at which

(Like some unequal bride in nobler sheets)  
 Receives her lord ; the joyful London meets  
 The princely York, himself alone a freight ;  
 The Swiftsure groans beneath great Gloster's weight : \*  
 Secure as when the halcyon breeds, with these,  
 He, that was born to drown, might cross the seas.  
 Heaven could not own a Providence, and take  
 The wealth three nations ventured at a stake.  
 The same indulgence Charles's voyage blessed,  
 Which in his right had miracles confessed.  
 The winds, that never moderation knew,  
 Afraid to blow too much, too faintly blew ;  
 Or, out of breath with joy, could not enlarge  
 Their straitened lungs, or conscious of their charge.  
 The British Amphytrite, smooth and clear,  
 In richer azure never did appear ;  
 Proud her returning prince to entertain  
 With the submitted fasces of the main.

And welcome now, great monarch, to your own !  
 Behold the approaching cliffs of Albion.  
 It is no longer motion cheats your view ;  
 As you meet it, the land approacheth you. †

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the tailors and painters were at work, cutting out some pieces of yellow cloth in the fashion of a crown and C. R., and put it upon a fair sheet, and that into the flag instead of the States' arms, which after dinner was finished and set up.'

\* The Duke of Gloucester, third son of Charles I., was conveyed in the Swiftsure. The name of this vessel does not appear to have been changed. It was the Richard, and not the Swiftsure, as stated by the last editor of Dryden, that was altered to the James.

† The elements, which on the death of Cromwell burst out in storms and floods, are here represented as taking part in the welcome that awaited Charles on his return. The winds, afraid to blow too much, blow too little, or, fairly out of breath with joy, are incapable of expanding their lungs. But the grand hyperbole is reserved for the land, which, in its eagerness to receive the king, comes out to meet him ; while its white cliffs, like a penitential sheet, express their remorse for the past. Dr. Johnson has found a parallel for the movement of the land in some verses read by a French poet to Malherbe, wherein France was described as advancing to meet the monarch. ' Though this was in my time,' said Malherbe, ' I do not remember it.' Yet this

The land returns, and, in the white it wears  
The marks of penitence and sorrow bears.  
But you, whose goodness your descent doth show,  
Your heavenly parentage and earthly too ;  
By that same mildness, which your father's crown  
Before did ravish, shall secure your own.  
Not tied to rules of policy, you find  
Revenge less sweet than a forgiving mind.  
Thus, when the Almighty would to Moses give  
A sight of all he could behold and live ;  
A voice before his entry did proclaim,  
Long-suffering, goodness, mercy, in his name.  
Your power to justice doth submit your cause,  
Your goodness only is above the laws ;  
Whose rigid letter, while pronounced by you,  
Is softer made. So winds, that tempests brew,  
When through Arabian groves they take their flight,  
Made wanton with rich odours, lose their spite.  
And as those lees, that trouble it, refine  
The agitated soul of generous wine :  
So tears of joy, for your returning, spilt,  
Work out, and expiate our former guilt.  
Methinks I see those crowds on Dover's strand,  
Who, in their haste to welcome you to land,  
Choked up the beach with their still growing store,  
And made a wilder torrent on the shore :  
While, spurred with eager thoughts of past delight,  
Those, who had seen you, court a second sight ;  
Preventing still your steps, and making haste  
To meet you often wheresoe'er you past.

---

figure is the least objectionable of this group of conceits. It is simply substituting a type for the reality, the trope which rhetoricians call metonymy, and which all people unconsciously employ in ordinary conversation. By the *land* approaching the king, the poet means the *people*, who, no doubt, crowded the sea in boats in advance of his arrival. We say, 'the city came out to meet the king,' but it is not the city that comes out, but the authorities that represent it. When we say that a man keeps a good table, nobody supposes that we mean the table itself.

How shall I speak of that triumphant day,  
 When you renewed the expiring pomp of May!  
 A month that owns an interest in your name—  
 You and the flowers are its peculiar claim.\*  
 That star, that at your birth shone out so bright,  
 It stained the duller sun's meridian light,  
 Did once again its potent fires renew,  
 Guiding our eyes to find and worship you.†

And now Time's whiter series is begun,  
 Which in soft centuries shall smoothly run:  
 Those clouds, that overcast your morn, shall fly,  
 Dispelled to farthest corners of the sky.  
 Our nation, with united interest blest,  
 Not now content to poise, shall sway the rest.  
 Abroad your empire shall no limits know,  
 But, like the sea, in boundless circles flow;  
 Your much-loved fleet shall, with a wide command,  
 Besiege the petty monarchs of the land;  
 And as old Time his offspring swallowed down,‡  
 Our ocean in its depths all seas shall drown,

\* The king's birthday, the 29th of May, was selected for his majesty's entry into London.

† The star said to have been visible on the nativity of Charles, in 1630, and here reproduced in the broad daylight on his restoration, was not the only celestial marvel that distinguished the memorable 29th of May. Lilly, the astrologer, who, according to his own account, foretold the plague and the fire, noted a still more extraordinary appearance on one of these anniversaries. 'In this year,' he says, '1645, I published a treatise called the *Starry Messenger*, with an interpretation of three suns seen in London, 29th May, 1644, being Charles the Second's birth-day.'—*Life and Times*. Sir Richard Baker, in his Chronicle, records the appearance of the star on the morning of Charles's birth, and says that it was seen about noon-time; but, he adds, 'what it portended, good or ill, we leave to the astrologers.' Bishop Corbett, who wrote a poem on the 'apparition' of this star, and an eclipse which followed it, speaks more confidently of these 'mysterious prodigies,' from which he draws 'prognostics of a rare prosperity!'

‡ This is the old classical image which represented Time constantly producing and devouring his own children—minutes, hours, days, years, &c.; but as these are not the offspring of Time, but Time itself, which has no existence apart from them, the myth might be reconciled to Christianity by representing Eternity as 'swallowing them down.'

Their wealthy trade from pirate's rapine free,  
 Our merchants shall no more adventurers be ;  
 Nor in the farthest east those dangers fear,  
 Which humble Holland must dissemble here.  
 Spain to your gift alone her Indies owes ;  
 For, what the powerful takes not, he bestows :  
 And France, that did an exile's presence fear,  
 May justly apprehend you still too near.  
 At home the hateful names of parties cease,  
 And factious souls are wearied into peace.  
 The discontented now are only they,  
 Whose crimes before did your just cause betray :  
 Of those your edicts some reclaim from sin,  
 But most your life and blest example win.  
 Oh happy prince ! whom Heaven hath taught the way,  
 By paying vows to have more vows to pay !  
 Oh happy age ! Oh times like those alone,  
 By fate reserved for great Augustus' throne !  
 When the joint growth of arms and arts foreshow  
 The world a monarch, and that monarch you.

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TO MY HONOURED FRIEND SIR ROBERT HOWARD,  
 ON HIS EXCELLENT POEMS.

[THIS piece belongs to the same period as the *Astraea Redux*. It was prefixed, according to the custom of the day, to Sir Robert Howard's poems, published by Herringman in 1660. In such addresses we must not look for truth, but naked panegyric: and, in that sense, this poem is a model in its kind, for the flattery is egregious.]

**A**S there is music uninformed by art  
 In those wild notes, which, with a merry heart,  
 The birds in unfrequented shades express,  
 Who, better taught at home, yet please us less,

So in your verse a native sweetness dwells,  
 Which shames composure, and its art excels.\*  
 Singing no more can your soft numbers grace,  
 Than paint adds charms unto a beauteous face.  
 Yet as, when mighty rivers gently creep,  
 Their even calmness does suppose them deep;  
 Such is your muse: no metaphor swelled high  
 With dangerous boldness lifts her to the sky:  
 Those mounting fancies, when they fall again,  
 Show sand and dirt at bottom do remain.  
 So firm a strength, and yet withal so sweet,  
 Did never but in Samson's riddle meet.  
 'Tis strange each line so great a weight should bear  
 And yet no sign of toil, no sweat appear.  
 Either your art hides art, as stoics feign  
 Then least to feel when most they suffer pain;  
 And we, dull souls, admire, but cannot see  
 What hidden springs within the engine be:  
 Or 'tis some happiness that still pursues  
 Each act and motion of your graceful muse.  
 Or is it fortune's work, that in your head  
 The curious net that is for fancies spread,†  
 Lets through its meshes every meaner thought,  
 While rich ideas there are only caught?  
 Sure that's not all; this is a piece too fair  
 To be the child of chance, and not of care.

\* 'One would have thought, from this elegant exordium, that Sir Robert Howard was a son of fancy, and warbled his native woodnotes wild with peculiar freedom and felicity. His poems, which are hard and prosaic, are not of this kind. The edition to which these were prefixed was printed by Herringman, 1660, and contains a Panegyric to the King, Songs and Sonnets, the Blind Lady, a comedy; the fourth book of Virgil, the Achilleis of Statius, a panegyric on General Monk. The songs are without harmony of numbers; the fourth book of Virgil lame and not faithful; the notes added to the Achilleis are some of them learned; the panegyric on Monk very inferior to that of Dryden. He wrote besides, *The Committee*, a comedy; *The Great Favourite*, a tragedy; *The Indian Queen*, a tragedy; *The Surprisal*, a tragico-comedy; *The Vestal Virgin*, a tragedy. In this epistle, the lines 23, 25, 31, 40, 44, 60, 100, are full of fulsome and false adulation.—D. J. WARTON.'

† A compliment to a poem of Sir Robert's, entitled *Rete Mirabile*.

No atoms casually together hurled  
Could e'er produce so beautiful a world ;  
Nor dare I such a doctrine here admit,  
As would destroy the providence of wit.  
'Tis your strong genius, then, which does not feel  
Those weights, would make a weaker spirit reel.  
To carry weight, and run so lightly too,  
Is what alone your Pegasus can do.  
Great Hercules himself could ne'er do more,  
Than not to feel those heavens and gods he bore.  
Your easier odes, which for delight were penned,  
Yet our instruction make their second end ;  
We're both enriched, and pleased, like them that woo  
At once a beauty, and a fortune too.  
Of moral knowledge poesy was queen,  
And still she might, had wanton wits not been ;  
Who, like ill guardians, lived themselves at large,  
And, not content with that, debauched their charge  
Like some brave captain, your successful pen  
Restores the exiled to her crown again :  
And gives us hope, that having seen the days  
When nothing flourished but fanatic bays,  
All will at length in this opinion rest,—  
'A sober prince's government is best.'  
This is not all ; your art the way has found  
To make the improvement of the richest ground ;  
That soil which those immortal laurels bore,  
That once the sacred Maro's temples wore.  
Eliza's griefs are so expressed by you,  
They are too eloquent to have been true.  
Had she so spoke, Æneas had obeyed  
What Dido, rather than what Jove, had said.  
If funeral rites can give a ghost repose,  
Your muse so justly has discharged those,  
Eliza's shade may now its wandering cease,  
And claim a title to the fields of peace.  
But if Æneas be obliged, no less  
Your kindness great Achilles doth confess ;

Who, dressed by Statius in too bold a look,  
Did ill become those virgin robes he took.  
To understand how much we owe to you,  
We must your numbers, with your author's, view:  
Then we shall see his work was lamely rough,  
Each figure stiff, as if designed in buff:  
His colours laid so thick on every place,  
As only showed the paint, but hid the face.  
But, as in perspective, we beauties see,  
Which in the glass, not in the picture, be;  
So here our sight obligingly mistakes  
That wealth, which his your bounty only makes.  
Thus vulgar dishes are, by cooks, disguised,  
More for their dressing, than their substance prized.  
Your curious notes so search into that age,  
When all was fable but the sacred page,  
That, since in that dark night we needs must stray,  
We are at least misled in pleasant way.  
But what we most admire, your verse no less  
The prophet than the poet doth confess.  
Ere our weak eyes discerned the doubtful streak  
Of light, you saw great Charles's morning break.  
So skilful seamen ken the land from far,  
Which shows like mists to the dull passenger.  
To Charles your muse first pays her duteous love,  
As still the ancients did begin from Jove;  
With Monk you end, whose name preserved shall be,  
As Rome recorded Rufus' memory;  
Who thought it greater honour to obey  
His country's interest, than the world to sway.  
But to write worthy things of worthy men,  
Is the peculiar talent of your pen;  
Yet let me take your mantle up, and I  
Will venture in your right to prophesy:—  
‘ This work, by merit first of fame secure,  
Is likewise happy in its geniture;  
For, since ‘tis born when Charles ascends the throne,  
It shares at once his fortune and its own.’

## TO HIS SACRED MAJESTY.

A PANEGYRIC ON HIS CORONATION.

[THE coronation took place on St. George's day, the 23rd April, 1661. This poem appeared immediately afterwards. It was published by Herringman.]

IN that wild deluge where the world was drowned,  
 When life and sin one common tomb had found,  
 The first small prospect of a rising hill  
 With various notes of joy the ark did fill :  
 Yet when that flood in its own depths was drowned,  
 It left behind it false and slippery ground ;  
 And the more solemn pomp was still deferred,  
 Till new-born nature in fresh looks appeared.  
 Thus, Royal Sir, to see you landed here,  
 Was cause enough of triumph for a year :  
 Nor would your care those glorious joys repeat,  
 Till they at once might be secure and great :  
 Till your kind beams, by their continued stay,  
 Had warmed the ground, and called the damps away.  
 Such vapours, while your powerful influence dries,  
 Then soonest vanish when they highest rise.  
 Had greater haste these sacred rites prepared,  
 Some guilty months had in your triumphs shared :  
 But this untainted year is all your own ;  
 Your glories may without our crimes be shown.\*  
 We had not yet exhausted all our store,  
 When you refreshed our joys by adding more :  
 As heaven, of old, dispensed celestial dew,  
 You gave us manna, and still give us new.

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\* The new year, to which the coronation was postponed, was not quite so 'untainted' as Dryden represents it. No less than thirteen of the fifth-monarchy men were executed on the 19th and 21st of January ; and, on the 30th, the bodies of Cromwell, Bradshaw, and Ireton were hung up at Tyburn, and buried in a hole under the gallows. Within less than a month after the coronation, the Duke of Argyle was beheaded at Edinburgh.

Now our sad ruins are removed from sight,  
 The season too comes fraught with new delight :  
 Time seems not now beneath his years to stoop,  
 Nor do his wings with sickly feathers droop :  
 Soft western winds waft o'er the gaudy spring,  
 And opened scenes of flowers and blossoms bring,  
 To grace this happy day, while you appear,  
 Not king of us alone, but of the year.  
 All eyes you draw, and with the eyes the heart ;  
 Of your own pomp yourself the greatest part :  
 Loud shouts the nation's happiness proclaim,  
 And heaven this day is feasted with your name.  
 Your cavalcade the fair spectators view,  
 From their high standings, yet look up to you.  
 From your brave train each singles out a prey,  
 And longs to date a conquest from your day.  
 Now charged with blessings while you seek repose,  
 Officious slumbers haste your eyes to close ;  
 And glorious dreams stand ready to restore  
 The pleasing shapes of all you saw before.  
 Next to the sacred temple you are led,  
 Where waits a crown for your more sacred head :  
 How justly from the church that crown is due,  
 Preserved from ruin, and restored by you !  
 The grateful choir their harmony employ,  
 Not to make greater, but more solemn joy.  
 Wrapt soft and warm your name is sent on high,  
 As flames do on the wings of incense fly.  
 Music herself is lost ; in vain she brings  
 Her choicest notes to praise the best of kings :  
 Her melting strains in you a tomb have found,  
 And lie like bees in their own sweetness drowned.  
 He that brought peace, all discord could atone,  
 His name is music of itself alone.  
 Now while the sacred oil anoints your head,  
 And fragrant scents, begun from you, are spread  
 Through the large dome, the people's joyful sound,  
 Sent back, is still preserved in hallowed ground ;

Which in one blessing mixed descends on you ;  
 As heightened spirits fall in richer dew.  
 Not that our wishes do increase your store ;  
 Full of yourself, you can admit no more.  
 We add not to your glory, but employ  
 Our time, like angels, in expressing joy.  
 Nor is it duty, or our hopes alone,  
 Create that joy, but full fruition : \*  
 We know those blessings, which we must possess,  
 And judge of future by past happiness.  
 No promise can oblige a prince so much  
 Still to be good, as long to have been such.  
 A noble emulation heats your breast,  
 And your own fame now robs you of your rest.  
 Good actions still must be maintained with good,  
 As bodies nourished with resembling food.  
 You have already quenched sedition's brand ;  
 And zeal, which burnt it, only warms the land.  
 The jealous sects, that dare not trust their cause  
 So far from their own will as to the laws,  
 You for their umpire and their synod take,  
 And their appeal alone to Cæsar make.  
 Kind heaven so rare a temper did provide,  
 That guilt repenting might in it confide.  
 Among our crimes oblivion may be set ;  
 But 'tis our king's perfection to forget.

\* 'A particle of the old versification, of which, I believe, in all his works there is not another.'—JOHNSON. This is an oversight. A similar instance occurs in the poem on Lord Hastings ; another in the *Astræa Redux*. Pope repeated to Spence two lines he had written when he was a boy, describing something passing away as quick as thought, in which the same peculiarity occurs :

‘So swift—this moment here, the next 'tis gone,  
 So imperceptible the motion.’

This sort of rhyme is constantly employed by the poets of the sixteenth century. Herrick abounds in it. Amongst Dryden's contemporaries there are numerous instances of it ; one of the most remarkable occurs in a poem of Marvell's :—

‘Obliged by frequent visits of this man,  
 Whom as a priest, poet, musician,’ &c.

Virtues unknown to these rough northern climes,  
 From milder heavens you bring, without their crimes.\*  
 Your calmness does no after-storms provide,  
 Nor seeming patience mortal anger hide.  
 When empire first from families did spring,  
 Then every father governed as a king:  
 But you, that are a sovereign prince, allay  
 Imperial power with your paternal sway.  
 From those great cares when ease your soul unbends,  
 Your pleasures are designed to noble ends;  
 Born to command the mistress of the seas,  
 Your thoughts themselves in that blue empire please.  
 Hither in summer evenings you repair,  
 To taste the fraicheur of the purest air:  
 Undaunted here you ride, when winter raves,  
 With Cæsar's heart that rose above the waves.  
 More I could sing, but fear my numbers stays;  
 No loyal subject dares that courage praise.  
 In stately frigates most delight you find,†  
 Where well-drawn battles fire your martial mind.  
 What to your cares we owe, is learnt from hence,  
 When even your pleasures serve for our defence.  
 Beyond your court flows in the admitted tide,  
 Where in new depths the wondering fishes glide:  
 Here in a royal bed the waters sleep;  
 When tired at sea, within this bay they creep.‡  
 Here the mistrustful fowl no harm suspects,  
 So safe are all things which our king protects.

\* This was surely very bold flattery, considering the vices Charles brought over from the 'milder heavens' of his banishment.

† Charles II. had a great passion for yachts, and several were built for him. The art of ship-building made considerable advances under the Stuarts; but the great improvements, through the skill of the Petts, were begun under James I., and carried to their height by the fostering care of his successor.

‡ One of the improvements introduced into St. James's Park by Charles II. was that of making a river through it, which connected it with the Thames. The works were begun soon after the return of the king. Pepys saw them in progress in September, 1660.

From your loved Thames a blessing yet is due,  
 Second alone to that it brought in you ;  
 A queen, near whose chaste womb, ordained by fate,  
 The souls of kings unborn for bodies wait.\*  
 It was your love before made discord cease :  
 Your love is destined to your country's peace.  
 Both Indies, rivals in your bed, provide  
 With gold or jewels to adorn your bride ;  
 This to a mighty king presents rich ore,  
 While that with incense does a god implore.  
 Two kingdoms wait your doom ; and, as you choose,  
 This must receive a crown, or that must lose.  
 Thus from your royal oak, like Jove's of old,  
 Are answers sought, and destinies foretold :  
 Propitious oracles are begged with vows,  
 And crowns that grow upon the sacred boughs.  
 Your subjects, while you weigh the nation's fate,  
 Suspend to both their doubtful love or hate :  
 Choose only, Sir, that so they may possess  
 With their own peace their children's happiness.

---

## TO THE LORD-CHANCELLOR HYDE.

Presented on New Year's Day, 1662.

[‘INTO this poem,’ says Dr. Johnson, ‘Dryden seems to have collected all his powers ; and after this he did not often bring upon his anvil such stubborn and unmalleable thoughts.’ This description is loose. The powers it exhibits are versification, imagery, and panegyric ; the first in perfection, the others in excess. Dryden had not yet brought into play his profound knowledge of human nature, his sagacity in reflection, and his great satirical faculty. The poem commands admiration by the fulness of the measure, the richness and

\* Unhappily for the future queen herself, these anticipations were never realized.

variety of the figures, and the art with which it ministers to the vanity of Clarendon. The passage in which the King and Clarendon are united like earth and sky, to bound the horizon of England, is elaborated with extraordinary skill, and is no less remarkable as a poetical achievement, than as a piece of subtle flattery ]

MY LORD,

WHILE flattering crowds officiously appear  
To give themselves, not you, a happy year ;  
And by the greatness of their presents prove  
How much they hope, but not how well they love,—  
The Muses, who your early courtship boast,  
Though now your flames are with their beauty lost,  
Yet watch their time, that, if you have forgot  
They were your mistresses, the world may not :  
Decayed by time and wars, they only prove  
Their former beauty by your former love ;  
And now present, as ancient ladies do,  
That courted long, at length are forced to woo.  
For still they look on you with such kind eyes,  
As those, that see the church's sovereign rise ;  
From their own order chose, in whose high state,  
They think themselves the second choice of fate.  
When our great monarch into exile went,  
Wit and religion suffered banishment.  
Thus once, when Troy was wrapped in fire and smoke,  
The helpless gods their burning shrines forsook ;  
They with the vanquished prince and party go,  
And leave their temples empty to the foe.  
At length the Muses stand, restored again,  
To that great charge which nature did ordain ;  
And their loved Druids seem revived by fate,  
While you dispense the laws, and guide the state.  
The nation's soul, our monarch, does dispense,  
Through you, to us his vital influence ;  
You are the channel, where those spirits flow,  
And work them higher, as to us they go.

In open prospect nothing bounds our eye,  
Until the earth seems joined unto the sky :  
So in this hemisphere our utmost view  
Is only bounded by our king and you :  
Our sight is limited where you are joined,  
And beyond that no farther heaven can find.  
So well your virtues do with his agree,  
That, though your orbs of different greatness be,  
Yet both are for each other's use disposed,  
His to inclose, and yours to be inclosed.  
Nor could another in your room have been,  
Except an emptiness had come between.  
Well may he, then, to you his cares impart,  
And share his burden where he shares his heart.  
In you his sleep still wakes ; his pleasures find  
Their share of business in your labouring mind.  
So, when the weary sun his place resigns,  
He leaves his light, and by reflection shines.

Justice, that sits and frowns where public laws  
Exclude soft mercy from a private cause,  
In your tribunal most herself does please ; \*  
There only smiles because she lives at ease ;  
And, like young David, finds her strength the more,  
When disincumbered from those arms she wore.  
Heaven would our royal master should exceed  
Most in that virtue, which we most did need ;  
And his mild father (who too late did find  
All mercy vain but what with power was joined)  
His fatal goodness left to fitter times,  
Not to increase, but to absolve, our crimes :  
But when the heir of this vast treasure knew  
How large a legacy was left to you,  
(Too great for any subject to retain)  
He wisely tied it to the crown again :

\* The justice with which Clarendon administered his judicial functions may have deserved the homage here rendered to it ; but it is worthy of note that Dryden nowhere alludes to the less questionable and more obvious virtue exhibited by the chancellor in his dignified resistance to the licentiousness of the court.

Yet, passing through your hands, it gathers more,  
As streams, through mines, bear tincture of their ore.  
While empiric politicians use deceit,  
Hide what they give, and cure but by a cheat ;  
You boldly show that skill which they pretend,  
And work by means as noble as your end :  
Which should you veil, we might unwind the clue,  
As men do nature, till we came to you.  
And, as the Indies were not found, before  
Those rich perfumes, which, from the happy shore,  
The winds upon their balmy wings conveyed,  
Whose guilty sweetness first their world betrayed ;  
So, by your counsels, we are brought to view  
A rich and undiscovered world in you.  
By you our monarch does that fame assure,  
Which kings must have, or cannot live secure :  
For prosperous princes gain their subjects' heart,  
Who love that praise in which themselves have part.  
By you he fits those subjects to obey,  
As heaven's eternal monarch does convey  
His power unseen, and man, to his designs  
By his bright ministers, the stars, inclines.

Our setting sun, from his declining seat,  
Shot beams of kindness on you, not of heat :  
And, when his love was bounded in a few,  
That were unhappy, that they might be true,  
Made you the favourite of his last sad times,  
That is a sufferer in his subjects' crimes :  
Thus those first favours you received, were sent,  
Like heaven's rewards in earthly punishment.  
Yet fortune, conscious of your destiny,  
E'en then took care to lay you softly by ;  
And wrapped your fate among her precious things,  
Kept fresh to be unfolded with your king's.  
Shown all at once, you dazzled so our eyes,  
As new-born Pallas did the gods surprise ;  
When, springing forth from Jove's new-closing wound,  
She struck the warlike spear into the ground ;

Which sprouting leaves did suddenly inclose,  
And peaceful olives shaded as they rose.

How strangely active are the arts of peace,  
Whose restless motions less than wars do cease !  
Peace is not freed from labour, but from noise ;  
And war more force, but not more pains employs :  
Such is the mighty swiftness of your mind,  
That, like the earth, it leaves our sense behind,  
While you so smoothly turn and roll our sphere,  
That rapid motion does but rest appear.  
For, as in nature's swiftness, with the throng  
Of flying orbs while ours is borne along,  
All seems at rest to the deluded eye,  
Moved by the soul of the same harmony ;  
So, carried on by your unwearied care,  
We rest in peace, and yet in motion share.  
Let envy, then, those crimes within you see,  
From which the happy never must be free ;  
(Envy, that does with misery reside,  
The joy and the revenge of ruined pride.)  
Think it not hard, if, at so cheap a rate,  
You can secure the constancy of fate,  
Whose kindness sent what does their malice seem,  
By lesser ills the greater to redeem ;  
Nor can we this weak shower a tempest call,  
But drops of heat, that in the sunshine fall.  
You have already wearied fortune so,  
She cannot farther be your friend or foe ;  
But sits all breathless, and admires to feel  
A fate so weighty, that it stops her wheel.\*  
In all things else above our humble fate,  
Your equal mind yet swells not into state,  
But, like some mountain in those happy isles,  
Where in perpetual spring young nature smiles,

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\* The fate that awaited Clarendon stopped his own wheel, and reversed the prophecy of the poet. In five years from this time Clarendon was banished. He died in exile at Rouen, in 1674.

Your greatness shows; no horror to affright,  
But trees for shade, and flowers to court the sight;  
Sometimes the hill submits itself a while  
In small descents, which do its height beguile;  
And sometimes mounts, but so as billows play,  
Whose rise not hinders, but makes short, our way.  
Your brow, which does no fear of thunder know,  
Sees rolling tempests vainly beat below;  
And, like Olympus' top, the impression wears  
Of love and friendship writ in former years.  
Yet, unimpaired with labours, or with time,  
Your age but seems to a new youth to climb.  
Thus heavenly bodies do our time beget,  
And measure change, but share no part of it.  
And still it shall without a weight increase,  
Like this new-year, whose motions never cease.  
For, since the glorious course you have begun  
Is led by Charles, as that is by the sun,  
It must both weightless and immortal prove,  
Because the centre of it is above.

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## SATIRE ON THE DUTCH.

Written in the Year 1662.

[THE first specimen of Dryden's powers of ridicule and invective. The freedom, vigour, and familiarity of the treatment produced the desired effect of inflaming the people against the Dutch. Ten years later, when the national hostility to Holland became still more violent, these lines were transplanted into the prologue and epilogue to Dryden's *Amboyna*, and delivered from the stage. Scott thinks it probable that this poem was written towards the end of 1662; but from the absence of all allusion to the marriage of the king, which was solemnized in May, and the sale of Dunkirk, which took place in October, the likelihood is in favour of an earlier date.]

AS needy gallants, in the scrivener's hands,  
 Court the rich knaves that gripe their mortgaged  
 The first fat buck of all the season's sent, [lands ;  
 And keeper takes no fee in compliment ;  
 The dotage of some Englishmen is such,  
 To fawn on those who ruin them,—the Dutch.  
 They shall have all, rather than make a war  
 With those, who of the same religion are.  
 The Straits, the Guinea-trade, the herrings too ;  
 Nay, to keep friendship, they shall pickle you.\*  
 Some are resolved not to find out the cheat,  
 But, cuckold-like, love them that do the feat.  
 What injuries soe'er upon us fall,  
 Yet still the same religion answers all :—  
 Religion wheedled us to civil war,  
 Drew English blood, and Dutchmen's now would spare.  
 Be gulled no longer, for you'll find it true,  
 They have no more religion, faith ! than you.  
 Interest's the god they worship in their state,  
 And we, I take it, have not much of that.  
 Well monarchies may own religion's name ;  
 But states are atheists in their very frame.  
 They share a sin ; and such proportions fall,  
 That, like a stink, 'tis nothing to them all.  
 Think on their rapine, falsehood, cruelty,  
 And that, what once they were, they still would be.  
 To one well born the affront is worse and more,†  
 When he's abused and baffled by a boor.  
 With an ill grace the Dutch their mischiefs do ;  
 They've both ill nature and ill manners too.  
 Well may they boast themselves an ancient nation ;  
 For they were bred ere manners were in fashion :

\* In the Prologue to *Amboyna* this line is altered into a pun, to give it a more telling point with the audience.

‘ Nay, to preserve them, they shall pickle you.’

† The remainder of the satire from this line to the end forms the conclusion of the Epilogue, as the preceding lines form the opening of the Prologue, to *Amboyna*.

And their new commonwealth has set them free  
 Only from honour and civility.  
 Venetians do not more uncouthly ride,  
 Than did their lubber state mankind describe;\*  
 Their sway became them with as ill a mien,  
 As their own paunches swell above their chin.  
 Yet is their empire no true growth, but humour,  
 And only two kings' touch can cure the tumour.†  
 As Cato, fruits of Afric did display,  
 Let us before our eyes their Indies lay:  
 All loyal English will like him conclude;—  
 Let Cæsar live, and Carthage be subdued.‡

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TO THE LADY CASTLEMAINE,  
 UPON HER ENCOURAGING HIS FIRST PLAY.

[THE lady to whom these verses were inscribed was the Mrs. Palmer, afterwards Duchess of Cleveland, in whose agreeable society Charles II. sought repose from the fatigues of the national enthusiasm, on the night of his landing in England. Her husband, Roger Palmer, a gentleman of fortune, and a steadfast adherent of the Stuarts, was created an Irish peer (though not for his loyalty) a few months after the

\* The awkwardness of Venetians on horseback, there being no opportunity for practising horsemanship in Venice, has passed into a common Italian proverb. When an Italian sits a horse ill, he is said to ride as badly as a grandee of Venice.

† The projected union between France and England is here hinted at.

‡ The application of the famous *Delenda est Carthago* of Cato to Holland was ultimately borne out by results, which, if they did not strictly fulfil the historical parallel, were of much greater magnitude. No man at that time could have anticipated the conquests afterwards accomplished by the English arms in the East. The Dutch were then gradually subverting the Portuguese in India, and obstructing the efforts of the handful of English traders who were attempting to cultivate a trade in that region. 'According to all human calculations at this time,' says a recent historian, 'the Dutch were about to establish a great empire in India, and the English were about to be driven ignominiously into new fields of enterprise, in another quarter of the globe.' —KAYE'S *Administration of the E. I. Company*. Dryden, in the *Annus Mirabilis*, again compares the growing power of Holland in India to the acquisitions of Carthage in Africa.

Restoration, with the title of Earl of Castlemaine. Lady Castlemaine was a powerful friend to Dryden at court, and the flattery with which he addresses her in these lines is sprinkled with the audacious conceits most likely to be acceptable to a lady occupying so influential a position. Early in 1661 her ladyship left her complaisant husband and removed to a chamber in Whitehall, ‘next to the king’s owne,’ says Pepys; and when these verses were written (1662), she was in the first flush of her power.]

A S seamen, shipwrecked on some happy shore,  
Discover wealth in lands unknown before ;  
And what their art had laboured long in vain,  
By their misfortunes happily obtain :  
So my much-envied muse, by storms long tost,  
Is thrown upon your hospitable coast,  
And finds more favour by her ill success,  
Than she could hope for by her happiness.  
Once Cato’s virtue did the gods oppose ;  
While they the victor, he the vanquished chose :  
But you have done what Cato could not do,  
To choose the vanquished, and restore him too.  
Let others triumph still, and gain their cause  
By their deserts, or by the world’s applause ;  
Let merit crowns, and justice laurels give,  
But let me happy by your pity live.  
True poets empty fame and praise despise,  
Fame is the trumpet, but your smile the prize.  
You sit above, and see vain men below  
Contend for what you only can bestow ;  
But those great actions others do by chance,  
Are, like your beauty, your inheritance :  
So great a soul, such sweetness joined in one,  
Could only spring from noble Grandison.  
You, like the stars, not by reflection bright,  
Are born to your own heaven, and your own light ;  
Like them are good, but from a nobler cause,  
From your own knowledge, not from nature’s laws.

Your power you never use, but for defence,  
 To guard your own, or others' innocence :  
 Your foes are such, as they, not you, have made,  
 And virtue may repel, though not invade.  
 Such courage did the ancient heroes show,  
 Who, when they might prevent, would wait the blow ;  
 With such assurance as they meant to say,  
 We will o'ercome, but scorn the safest way.  
 What further fear of danger can there be ?  
 Beauty, which captives all things, sets me free.  
 Posterity will judge by my success,  
 I had the Grecian poet's happiness,  
 Who, waving plots, found out a better way ;  
 Some god descended, and preserved the play.  
 When first the triumphs of your sex were sung  
 By those old poets, beauty was but young,  
 And few admired the native red and white,  
 Till poets dressed them up to charm the sight ;  
 So beauty took on trust, and did engage  
 For sums of praises till she came to age.  
 But this long-growing debt to poetry  
 You justly, madam, have discharged to me,  
 When your applause and favour did infuse  
 New life to my condemned and dying muse.

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## TO MY HONOURED FRIEND, DR. CHARLETON,

ON HIS LEARNED AND USEFUL WORKS; BUT MORE PARTICULARLY HIS TREATISE OF STONEHENGE, BY HIM RESTORED TO THE TRUE FOUNDER.

[THESE lines, published in 1663, exhibit the germs of strength and elegance striking deeper and deeper than in any of the preceding poems.]

THE longest tyranny that ever swayed,  
 Was that wherein our ancestors betrayed  
 Their free-born reason to the Stagyrite,  
 And made his torch their universal light.

So truth, while only one supplied the state,  
 Grew scarce, and dear, and yet sophisticate.  
 Still it was bought, like empiric wares, or charms,  
 Hard words sealed up with Aristotle's arms.  
 Columbus was the first that shook his throne ;  
 And found a temperate in a torrid zone :  
 The feverish air fanned by a cooling breeze :  
 The fruitful vales set round with shady trees ;  
 And guiltless men, who danced away their time,  
 Fresh as their groves, and happy as their clime.  
 Had we still paid that homage to a name,  
 Which only God and nature justly claim ;  
 The western seas had been our utmost bound,  
 Where poets still might dream the sun was drowned ;  
 And all the stars, that shine in southern skies,  
 Had been admired by none but savage eyes.

Among the asserters of free reason's claim,  
 Our nation's not the least in worth or fame.  
 The world to Bacon does not only owe  
 Its present knowledge, but its future too.  
 Gilbert\* shall live, till loadstones cease to draw,  
 Or British fleets the boundless ocean awe,  
 And noble Boyle,† not less in nature seen,  
 Than his great brother, read in states and men.  
 The circling streams, once thought but pools, of blood  
 (Whether life's fuel, or the body's food)  
 From dark oblivion Harvey's name shall save ;‡  
 While Ent§ keeps all the honour that he gave.  
 Nor are you, learned friend, the least renowned ;  
 Whose fame, not circumscribed with English ground,  
 Flies like the nimble journeys of the light,  
 And is, like that, unspent too in its flight.

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\* Dr. William Gilbert, physician to Queen Elizabeth and King James. He was the author of a curious dissertation on the magnet.

† The Hon. Robert Boyle, seventh son of the Earl of Cork, and founder of the Royal Society. His 'great brother' was the Earl of Orrery, a soldier, statesman, and dramatist.

‡ Dr. William Harvey, whose claim to the discovery of the circulation of the blood was vindicated by Dr. Charleton.

§ Sir George Ent, a celebrated physician.

Whatever truths have been, by art or chance,  
Redeemed from error, or from ignorance,  
Thin in their authors, like rich veins of ore,  
Your works unite, and still discover more.  
Such is the healing virtue of your pen,  
To perfect cures on books, as well as men.  
Nor is this work the least: you well may give  
To men new vigour, who make stones to live.  
Through you, the Danes, their short dominion lost,  
A longer conquest than the Saxons boast.  
Stonehenge, once thought a temple, you have found  
A throne, where kings, our earthly gods, were crowned;  
Where by their wondering subjects they were seen,  
Joyed with their stature, and their princely mien.  
Our sovereign here above the rest might stand,  
And here be chose again to rule the land.

These ruins sheltered once his sacred head,  
When he from Worcester's fatal battle fled;  
Watched by the genius of this royal place,  
And mighty visions of the Danish race.  
His refuge then was for a temple shown:  
But, he restored, 'tis now become a throne.

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## TO HER ROYAL HIGHNESS, THE DUCHESS,

ON THE MEMORABLE VICTORY GAINED BY THE DUKE OVER THE HOLLANDERS, JUNE 3, 1665. AND ON HER JOURNEY AFTERWARDS INTO THE NORTH.

[ANNE HYDE, Duchess of York, and daughter of the Chancellor Clarendon. She was one of the maids of honour to the Princess Henrietta, at whose house the duke first met her, during the exile of the royal family. Being attracted by her beauty, and failing in his design on her honour, the duke married her privately on the 24th November, 1659, at Breda, in Brabant, where they lived secretly as man and wife until

the Restoration, when the duke disowned his marriage, and is said to have resorted to violence to compel her to release him. But she appealed to the king, who ordered an investigation into the case, that terminated in the establishment of her rights. They were married again at midnight in the ensuing September, at Worcester House. Some particulars respecting the private marriage will be found in the appendix to the Memorials of the Civil War — *Fairfax Correspondence*. The duchess was an early friend of Dryden's, who addressed one of his epistles to her, and after her death defended her against Stillingfleet's answer to her Paper on her conversion to the Church of Rome.

The victory celebrated in this little poem (and afterwards enlarged upon in the *Annus Mirabilis*) was gained by the Duke of York over the Dutch, and so close to the shore, that the firing was heard all along the coast, a circumstance alluded to in the lines—

‘While, from afar, we heard the cannon play,  
Like distant thunder on a shiny day.’

In his Essay on Dramatic Poetry, Dryden informs us that the roar of the guns was heard in London: ‘the noise of the cannon from both navies reached our ears about the city, so that all men being alarmed with it, and in a dreadful suspense of the event, which they knew was then deciding, every one went following the sound as his fancy led him; and, leaving the town almost empty, some took towards the park, some across the river, others down it; all seeking the noise in the depth of silence.’ This extraordinary fact, for the battle was fought off Lowestoff, on the coast of Suffolk, upwards of a hundred miles from London, is also attested by Pepys; who, on two subsequent occasions, records similar instances, mentioning as a ‘miraculous thing’ that the guns heard in London were not heard at Deal or Dover.

The Duchess accompanied her husband to Harwich, where she witnessed his embarkation, and subsequently made that journey into the north, which, in a high strain of compliment, the poet calls her conquests by land, comparing them to the

duke's conquests by sea. The duke's conquest, however, on this occasion, was not a matter of unmixed congratulation, he being severely censured for the circumstances under which his ships slackened sail in the pursuit, and suffered the shattered fleet of the Dutch to escape. For the particulars of this mysterious affair see *Burnet*, i. 397-9. Oxford Edition.

The ease, gallantry, and refinement of this piece will remind the reader of Waller. Some of the critics said that the lines wanted height of fancy and dignity of expression, and Dryden, in his Letter to Sir Robert Howard prefixed to the *Annus Mirabilis* answered the charge in the words of Horace: *Nunc non erat his locus*—‘I knew I addressed them to a lady, and accordingly I affected the softness of expression, and the smoothness of measure, rather than the height of thought; and in what I did endeavour it is no vanity to say I have succeeded.’]

MADAM,

WHEN, for our sakes, your hero you resigned  
To swelling seas, and every faithless wind;  
When you released his courage, and set free  
A valour fatal to the enemy;  
You lodged your country's cares within your breast  
(The mansion where soft love should only rest),  
And, ere our foes abroad were overcome,  
The noblest conquest you had gained at home.  
Ah, what concerns did both your souls divide!  
Your honour gave us what your love denied:  
And 'twas for him much easier to subdue  
Those foes he fought with, than to part from you.  
That glorious day, which two such navies saw,  
As each unmatched might to the world give law.  
Neptune, yet doubtful whom he should obey,  
Held to them both the trident of the sea:  
The winds were hushed, the waves in ranks were cast,  
As awfully as when God's people past:  
Those, yet uncertain on whose sails to blow,  
These, where the wealth of nations ought to flow.

Then with the duke your highness ruled the day:  
While all the brave did his command obey,  
The fair and pious under you did pray.  
How powerful are chaste vows ! the wind and tide  
You bribed to combat on the English side.  
Thus to your much-loved lord you did convey  
An unknown succour, sent the nearest way.  
New vigour to his wearied arms you brought,  
(So Moses was upheld while Israel fought)  
While, from afar, we heard the cannon play,  
Like distant thunder on a shiny day.  
For absent friends we were ashamed to fear,  
When we considered what you ventured there.  
Ships, men, and arms, our country might restore,  
But such a leader could supply no more.  
With generous thoughts of conquest he did burn,  
Yet fought not more to vanquish than return.  
Fortune and victory he did pursue,  
To bring them, as his slaves, to wait on you :  
Thus beauty ravished the rewards of fame,  
And the fair triumphed when the brave o'ercame.  
Then, as you meant to spread another way  
By land your conquests, far as his by sea,  
Leaving our southern clime, you marched along,  
The stubborn North, ten thousand Cupids strong.  
Like commons the nobility resort,  
In crowding heaps, to fill your moving court :  
To welcome your approach the vulgar run,  
Like some new envoy from the distant sun,  
And country beauties by their lovers go,  
Blessing themselves, and wondering at the show.  
So, when the new-born Phoenix first is seen,  
Her feathered subjects all adore their queen,  
And while she makes her progress through the East,  
From every grove her numerous train's increased :  
Each Poet of the air her glory sings,  
And round him the pleased audience clap their wings.

## ANNUS MIRABILIS:

THE YEAR OF WONDERS, 1666. AN HISTORICAL POEM.

[THE Year of Wonders was the year 1666. In the preceding year London had been desolated by the plague, which was followed in this memorable year by the great fire. But these misfortunes were in some degree balanced by the successes of the English arms over the Dutch. Dryden announces the subject, or subjects, of the poem in his dedication of it to the city—the war, and the fire. The contrast is striking between the triumphs abroad and the ruin at home, in which the trade of the country, especially of the metropolis, had suffered severely. In an introductory letter to Sir Robert Howard he gives a still more particular account of his plan, assigning his reasons for adopting the quatrain stanza, and adding, that he followed Virgil as his model in the execution. He says that he made choice of the quatrain because he considered it the most noble and dignified in sound and number of any verse in use amongst us; yet after this experiment he entirely abandoned it, finding, no doubt, that its difficulties and inconveniences overbalanced its advantages. Comparing it with the easier couplet, where every two lines terminate the labour, he describes the alternate measure as requiring the poet ‘to bear along in his head the troublesome sense of four lines together,’ it being necessary to correctness that the ‘last line of the stanza should be considered in the composition of the first.’ Conscious, however, as he was of this obligation, he did not always fulfil it. Scott has selected some instances (the list of which might be readily enlarged), shewing the expedients he employed in filling up the last two lines of the stanza, after having exhausted the subject in the first two; and, as an example of this kind of failure, Johnson quotes the 15th stanza, of which he says that ‘it would not be hard to believe that Dryden had written the two first lines seriously, and that some wag had added the two latter in burlesque.’

Notwithstanding these blemishes, the poem is nobly conceived, and its details are wrought out with extraordinary breadth and power. The descriptive passages are clear and forcible, and less encumbered than usual with a distracting pomp of imagery, or display of learning. The horrors of battle and the strife of elements are portrayed with an energy that imparts a corresponding breathlessness and fury to the verse; and the skill with which the poet has collected and employed the sea-terms proper to the occasion, enhances the terrible reality of the picture. The poem, as a whole, disappoints expectation, from the inequality of the execution, and the mixture of subjects. But it abounds in single passages of transcendent merit, amongst which may be especially noticed the description of the night after the battle, on board the opposing fleets; the two ‘giant ships’ disabled by the assault of Prince Rupert; the launching of the London, riding in floating gold, and her sanguine streamers ‘spread ruffling to the wind;’ the India fleet hunted with its aromatic freight into the icy bay of Bergen; and, deducting an occasional complication of tropes, the entire picture of the fire. In spirit and treatment the poem is essentially heroic, and Dryden declares that he was restrained from calling it an epic only by the consideration of its brevity, and the want of unity in the action.

The *Annus Mirabilis* was published in 1667. A prose tract bearing the same title, we are informed by Malone, was published in 1662; and Mr. Partridge, and other almanack-makers, have starred their pages with it from time to time.

In the interval between the address to the Chancellor and the appearance of this poem, Dryden had begun to write for the stage. His acquaintance with Sir Robert Howard, son of the Earl of Berkshire (to whom the poem is addressed), began about the date of the Restoration, and was ripened into closer ties by Dryden’s marriage with his sister, in 1663. Sir Robert Howard was a pretender to letters with better parts than he got credit for, his real merits being obscured by an assumption of superiority which drew down upon him the contempt and irony of the literary people. Dryden assisted

him in some of his compositions, especially in his tragedy of the *Indian Queen*; but the controversy about the use of rhyme in dramatic poetry which sprang up between them suspended their friendship for some years. Howard was a common mark for the ridicule of the wits, who lampooned him with all the greater vindictiveness on account of his connexion with Dryden. Shadwell exposed him to the laughter of the town in the character of *Sir Positive At-all*, in the *Sullen Lovers*, a ‘foolish knight that pretends to understand everything in the world, and will suffer no man to understand anything.’ The *Lady Vain* of the same comedy was a notorious courtezan, whom Howard lived with first, and afterwards married. Howard died in 1700, and a good place which he had held in the Exchequer was bestowed upon Dryden’s friend Montagu, Earl of Halifax.]

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## DEDICATION.

To the METROPOLIS of GREAT BRITAIN, the most renowned and late flourishing City of London, in its Representatives the Lord Mayor and Court of Aldermen, the Sheriffs, and Common Council of it.

As perhaps I am the first who ever presented a work of this nature to the metropolis of any nation; so it is likewise consonant to justice, that he who was to give the first example of such a dedication, should begin it with that city which has set a pattern to all others of true loyalty, invincible courage, and unshaken constancy. Other cities have been praised for the same virtues; but I am much deceived if any have so dearly purchased their reputation: their fame has been won them by cheaper trials than an expensive, though necessary war, a consuming pestilence, and a more consuming fire. To submit yourselves with that humility to the judgments of Heaven, and at the same time to raise yourselves with that vigour above all human enemies: to be combated at once from above, and from below; to be struck down, and to triumph: I know not whether such trials have been ever paralleled in any nation; the resolution and successes of them never can be. Never had prince or people more mutual reason to love each other, if suffering for each other can endear affection. You have come together a pair of matchless lovers, through many difficulties; he,

through a long exile, various traverses of fortune, and the interposition of many rivals, who violently ravished and withheld you from him : and certainly you have had your share in sufferings. But Providence has cast upon you want of trade, that you might appear bountiful to your country's necessities; and the rest of your afflictions are not more the effects of God's displeasure (frequent examples of them having been in the reign of the most excellent princes) than occasions for the manifesting of your Christian and civil virtues. To you, therefore, this Year of Wonders is justly dedicated; because, you have made it so. You, who are to stand a wonder to all years and ages; and who have built yourselves an immortal monument on your own ruins. You are now a phœnix in her ashes; and, as far as humanity can approach, a great emblem of the suffering Deity: but Heaven never made so much piety and virtue, to leave it miserable. I have heard, indeed, of some virtuous persons who have ended unfortunately ; but never of any virtuous nation : Providence is engaged too deeply, when the cause becomes so general; and I cannot imagine it has resolved the ruin of that people at home, which it has blessed abroad with such successes. I am, therefore, to conclude that your sufferings are at an end; and that one part of my poem has not been more an history of your destruction, than the other a prophecy of your restoration. The accomplishment of which happiness, as it is the wish of all true Englishmen, so is it by none more passionately desired, than by,

The greatest of your admirers,

And most humble of your servants,

JOHN DRYDEN.

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*An Account of the ensuing Poem, in a Letter to the Honourable  
SIR ROBERT HOWARD.*

SIR,—I am so many ways obliged to you, and so little able to return your favours, that, like those who owe too much, I can only live by getting farther into your debt. You have not only been careful of my fortune, which was the effect of your nobleness, but you have been solicitous of my reputation, which is that of your kindness. It is not long since I gave you the trouble of perusing a play for me; and now, instead of an acknowledgment, I have given you a greater, in the correction of a poem. But since you are to bear this persecution, I will at least give you the encouragement of a martyr;—you could never suffer in a nobler cause. For I have chosen the most heroic subject which any poet could

desire. I have taken upon me to describe the motives, the beginning, progress, and successes of a most just and necessary war; in it, the care, management, and prudence of our king; the conduct and valour of a royal admiral; and of two incomparable generals; the invincible courage of our captains and seamen; and three glorious victories, the result of all. After this, I have, in the fire, the most deplorable, but withal the greatest argument that can be imagined; the destruction being so swift, so sudden, so vast, and miserable, as nothing can parallel in story. The former part of this poem, relating to the war, is but a due expiation for my not serving my king and country in it. All gentlemen are almost obliged to it: and I know no reason we should give that advantage to the commonalty of England, to be foremost in brave actions, which the nobles of France would never suffer in their peasants. I should not have written this but to a person who has been ever forward to appear in all employments, whither his honour and generosity have called him. The latter part of my poem, which describes the fire, I owe, first, to the piety, and fatherly affection of our monarch to his suffering subjects; and, in the second place, to the courage, loyalty, and magnanimity of the city; both which were so conspicuous, that I have wanted words to celebrate them as they deserve. I have called my poem historical, not epic, though both the actions and actors are as much heroic as any poem can contain. But since the action is not properly one, nor that accomplished in the last successes, I have judged it too bold a title for a few stanzas, which are little more in number than a single *Iliad*, or the longest of the *Aeneids*. For this reason (I mean not of length, but broken action, tied too severely to the laws of history), I am apt to agree with those who rank Lucan rather among historians in verse than epic poets; in whose room, if I am not deceived, *Silius Italicus*, though a worse writer, may more justly be admitted. I have chosen to write my poem in quatrains, or stanzas of four in alternate rhyme, because I have ever judged them more noble, and of greater dignity, both for the sound and number, than any other verse in use amongst us; in which I am sure I have your approbation. The learned languages have certainly a great advantage of us, in not being tied to the slavery of any rhyme; and were less constrained in the quantity of every syllable, which they might vary with spondees or dactyls, besides so many other helps of grammatical figures for the lengthening or abbreviation of them, than the modern are in the close of that one syllable, which often confines, and more often corrupts the sense of all the rest. But, in this necessity of our rhymes, I have always found

the couplet verse most easy, though not so proper for this occasion : for there the work is sooner at an end, every two lines concluding the labour of the poet; but in quatrains he is to carry it farther on, and not only so, but to bear along in his head the troublesome sense of four lines together. For those who write correctly in this kind must needs acknowledge that the last line of the stanza is to be considered in the composition of the first. Neither can we give ourselves the liberty of making any part of a verse for the sake of rhyme, or concluding with a word which is not current English, or using the variety of female rhymes; all which our fathers practised. And, for the female rhymes, they are still in use among other nations—with the Italian, in every line; with the Spaniard, promiscuously; with the French, alternately: as those who have read the Alarique, the Pucelle, or any of their later poems, will agree with me. And besides this, they write in Alexandrins, or verses of six feet; such as, amongst us, is the old translation of Homer, by Chapman: all which, by lengthening of their chain, makes the sphere of their activity the larger. I have dwelt too long upon the choice of my stanza, which you may remember is much better defended in the preface to Gondibert; and therefore I will hasten to acquaint you with my endeavours in the writing. In general I will only say, I have never yet seen the description of any naval fight in the proper terms which are used at sea; and if there be any such, in another language—as that of Lucan, in the third of his Pharsalia—yet I could not avail myself of it in the English; the terms of art, in every tongue, bearing more of the idiom of it than any other words. We hear, indeed, among our poets, of the thundering of guns, the smoke, the disorder, and the slaughter; but all these are common notions. And certainly, as those who in a logical dispute keep in general terms, would hide a fallacy; so, those who do it in any poetical description, would veil their ignorance.

*Descriptas servare vices operumque colores,  
Cur ego, si nequeo ignoroque, Poeta salutor?*

For my own part, if I had little knowledge of the sea, yet I have thought it no shame to learn. And if I have made some few mistakes, it is only, as you can bear me witness, because I have wanted opportunity to correct them. The whole poem being first written, and now sent you from a place where I have not so much as the converse of any seaman. Yet though the trouble I had in writing it was great, it was more than recompensed by the pleasure. I found myself so warm in celebrating the praises of

military men, two such especially as the prince and general,\* that it is no wonder if they inspired me with thoughts above my ordinary level. And I am well satisfied, that, as they are incomparably the best subject I ever had, excepting only the royal family; so also, that this I have written of them is much better than what I have performed on any other. I have been forced to help out other arguments; but this has been bountiful to me: they have been low and barren of praise, and I have exalted them, and made them fruitful; but here — *Omnia sponte sua reddit justissima tellus.* I have had a large, a fair, and a pleasant field; so fertile, that, without my cultivating, it has given me two harvests in a summer, and in both oppressed the reaper. All other greatness in subjects is only counterfeit: it will not endure the test of danger; the greatness of arms is only real: other greatness burdens a nation with its weight; this supports it with its strength. And as it is the happiness of the age, so it is the peculiar goodness of the best of kings, that we may praise his subjects without offending him. Doubtless it proceeds from a just confidence of his own virtue, which the lustre of no other can be so great as to darken in him; for the good or the valiant are never safely praised under a bad or a degenerate prince. But to return from this digression to a farther account of my poem. I must crave leave to tell you, that, as I have endeavoured to adorn it with noble thoughts, so much more to express those thoughts with elocution. The composition of all poems is, or ought to be, of wit; and wit in the poet, or wit-writing (if you will give me leave to use a school-distinction), is no other than the faculty of imagination in the writer; which, like a nimble spaniel, beats over and ranges through the field of memory, till it springs the quarry it hunted after: or, without metaphor, which searches over all the memory for the species or ideas of those things which it designs to represent. Wit written is that which is well defined; the happy result of thought, or product of imagination. But to proceed from wit, in the general notion of it, to the proper wit of an heroic or historical poem; I judge it chiefly to consist in the delightful imaging of persons, actions, passions, or things. 'Tis not the jerk or sting of an epigram, nor the seeming contradiction of a poor antithesis (the delight of an ill-judging audience in a play of rhyme) nor the jingle of a more poor Paranomasia; neither is it so much the morality of a grave sentence, affected by Lucan, but more sparingly used by Virgil; but it is some lively

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\* Prince Rupert and General Monk, Duke of Albemarle.

and apt description, dressed in such colours of speech, that it sets before your eyes the absent object as perfectly, and more delightfully than nature. So then the first happiness of the poet's imagination is properly invention, or finding of the thought; the second is fancy, or the variation, deriving, or moulding of that thought as the judgment represents it proper to the subject; the third is elocution, or the art of clothing and adorning that thought, so found, and varied, in apt, significant, and sounding words. The quickness of the imagination is seen in the invention, the fertility in the fancy, and the accuracy in the expression. For the two first of these, Ovid is famous amongst the poets; for the latter, Virgil. Ovid images more often the movements and affections of the mind, either combating between two contrary passions, or extremely discomposed by one. His words, therefore, are the least part of his care; for he pictures nature in disorder, with which the study and choice of words is inconsistent. This is the proper wit of dialogue or discourse, and consequently of the drama, where all that is said is to be supposed the effect of sudden thought; which, though it excludes not the quickness of wit in repartees, yet admits not a too curious election of words, too frequent allusions, or use of tropes, or in fine anything that shows remoteness of thought or labour in the writer. On the other side, Virgil speaks not so often to us in the person of another, like Ovid, but in his own: he relates almost all things as from himself, and thereby gains more liberty than the other to express his thoughts with all the graces of elocution, to write more figuratively, and to confess as well the labour as the force of his imagination. Though he describes his Dido well and naturally, in the violence of her passions, yet he must yield in that to the Myrrha, the Biblis, the Althaea, of Ovid. For as great an admirer of him as I am, I must acknowledge that, if I see not more of their souls than I see of Dido's, at least I have a greater concernment for them: and that convinces me that Ovid has touched those tender strokes more delicately than Virgil could. But when action or persons are to be described, when any such image is to be set before us, how bold, how masterly are the strokes of Virgil! We see the objects he presents us with in their native figures, in their proper motions; but so we see them, as our own eyes could never have beheld them, so beautiful in themselves. We see the soul of the poet, like that universal one of which he speaks, informing and moving through all his pictures:

—Totamque infusa per artus  
Mens agitat molem, et magno se corpore miscet.

We behold him embellishing his images, as he makes Venus breathing beauty upon her son Æneas.

---

lumenque juventæ  
Purpureum, et lætos oculis afflārat honores :  
Quale manus addunt ebori decus, aut ubi flavo  
Argentum Pariusve lapis circundatur auro.

See his Tempest, his Funeral Sports, his Combat of Turnus and Æneas : and in his Georgics, which I esteem the divinest part of all his writings, the Plague, the Country, the Battle of the Bulls, the Labour of the Bees, and those many other excellent images of nature, most of which are neither great in themselves, nor have any natural ornament to bear them up : but the words wherewith he describes them are so excellent, that it might be well applied to him, which was said by Ovid, *Materiam superabat opus* : the very sound of his words has often somewhat that is connatural to the subject ; and while we read him, we sit, as in a play, beholding the scenes of what he represents. To perform this, he made frequent use of tropes, which you know change the nature of a known word, by applying it to some other signification ; and this is it which Horace means in his epistle to the Pisos :

Dixeris egregiè, notum si callida verbum  
Reddiderit junctura novum —

But I am sensible I have presumed too far to entertain you with a rude discourse of that art, which you both know so well, and put into practice with so much happiness. Yet before I leave Virgil, I must own the vanity to tell you, and by you the world, that he has been my master in this poem : I have followed him everywhere, I know not with what success, but I am sure with diligence enough : my images are many of them copied from him, and the rest are imitations of him. My expressions also are as near as the idioms of the two languages would admit of in translation. And this, Sir, I have done with that boldness, for which I will stand accountable to any of our little critics, who, perhaps, are no better acquainted with him than I am. Upon your first perusal of this poem, you have taken notice of some words, which I have innovated (if it be too bold for me to say refined) upon his Latin ; which, as I offer not to introduce into English prose, so I hope they are neither improper, nor altogether inelegant in verse ; and, in this, Horace will again defend me.

Et nova, fictaque nuper, habebunt verba fidem, si  
Græco fonte cadunt, parcè detorta —

The inference is exceeding plain : for if a Roman poet might have liberty to coin a word, supposing only that it was derived from the Greek, was put into a Latin termination, and that he used this liberty but seldom, and with modesty ; how much more justly may I challenge that privilege to do it with the same prerequisites, from the best and most judicious of Latin writers ? In some places, where either the fancy or the words were his, or any other's, I have noted it in the margin, that I might not seem a plagiary ; in others I have neglected it, to avoid as well tediousness, as the affectation of doing it too often. Such descriptions or images well wrought, which I promise not for mine, are, as I have said, the adequate delight of heroic poesy ; for they beget admiration, which is its proper object ; as the images of the burlesque, which is contrary to this, by the same reason beget laughter : for the one shows nature beautified, as in the picture of a fair woman, which we all admire ; the other shows her deformed, as in that of a lazarus, or of a fool with distorted face and antique gestures, at which we cannot forbear to laugh, because it is a deviation from nature. But though the same images serve equally for the Epic poesy, and for the historic and panegyric, which are branches of it, yet a several sort of sculpture is to be used in them. If some of them are to be like those of Juvenal, *Stantes in curribus Æmiliani*, heroes drawn in their triumphal chariots, and in their full proportion ; others are to be like that of Virgil, *Spirantia mollius æra*: there is somewhat more of softness and tenderness to be shown in them. You will soon find I write not this without concern. Some, who have seen a paper of verses, which I wrote last year to her Highness the Duchess, have accused them of that only thing I could defend in them. They said, 'I did *humiserpere*, that I wanted not only height of fancy, but dignity of words, to set it off.' I might well answer with that of Horace, *Nunc non erat his locus*; I knew I addressed them to a lady, and accordingly I affected the softness of expression, and the smoothness of measure, rather than the height of thought; and in what I did endeavour, it is no vanity to say I have succeeded. I detest arrogance ; but there is some difference betwixt that and a just defence. But I will not farther bribe your candour, or the reader's. I leave them to speak for me ; and, if they can, to make out that character, not pretending to a greater, which I have given them.

And now, Sir, 'tis time I should relieve you from the tedious length of this account. You have better and more profitable employment for your hours, and I wrong the public to detain you

longer. In conclusion, I must leave my poem to you with all its faults, which I hope to find fewer in the printing by your emendations. I know you are not of the number of those, of whom the younger Pliny speaks; *Nec sunt parum multi, qui carpere amicos suos judicium vocant*: I am rather too secure of you on that side. Your candour in pardoning my errors may make you more remiss in correcting them; if you will not withal consider that they come into the world with your approbation, and through your hands. I beg from you the greatest favour you can confer upon an absent person, since I repose upon your management what is dearest to me, my fame and reputation; and, therefore, I hope it will stir you up to make my poem fairer by many of your blots; if not, you know the story of the gamester who married the rich man's daughter, and when her father denied the portion, christened all the children by his surname, that if, in conclusion, they must beg, they should do so by one name, as well as by the other. But since the reproach of my faults will light on you, 'tis but reason I should do you that justice to the readers, to let them know, that, if there be anything tolerable in this poem, they owe the argument to your choice, the writing to your encouragement, the correction to your judgment, and the care of it to your friendship, to which he must ever acknowledge himself to owe all things, who is,

Sir, the most obedient,

And most faithful of your servants,

JOHN DRYDEN.

From Charlton, in Wiltshire,  
Nov. 10, 1666.

### ANNUS MIRABILIS:

THE YEAR OF WONDERS, 1666.

#### I

IN thriving arts long time had Holland grown,  
Crouching at home and cruel when abroad;  
Scarce leaving us the means to claim our own;\*  
Our King they courted, and our merchants awed.

\* 'They obstructed us, and dictated to us. They compelled us to do what we did not wish, and prevented us from doing what we did. They committed excesses, and we paid the penalty of them in vicarious forfeitures and imprisonments.'—KAYE'S *Adm. of the E. I. Company*.

2

Trade, which like blood should circularly flow,  
 Stopped in their channels, found its freedom lost :  
 Thither the wealth of all the world did go,  
 And seemed but shipwrecked on so base a coast.

3

For them alone the heavens had kindly heat;  
 In eastern quarries ripening precious dew;\*  
 For them the Idumæan balm did sweat,  
 And in hot Ceylon spicy forests grew.

4

The sun but seemed the labourer of their year ;  
 Each waxing moon supplied her watery store,  
 To swell those tides, which from the line did bear  
 Their brim-full vessels to the Belgian shore.†

5

Thus, mighty in her ships, stood Carthage long,  
 And swept the riches of the world from far ;  
 Yet stooped to Rome, less wealthy, but more strong ;  
 And this may prove our second Punic war.

6

What peace can be, where both to one pretend ?  
 (But they more diligent, and we more strong)  
 Or if a peace, it soon must have an end ;  
 For they would grow too powerful, were it long.

7

Behold two nations then, engaged so far,  
 That each seven years the fit must shake each land ;  
 Where France will side to weaken us by war,  
 Who only can his vast designs withstand.

8

See how he feeds the Iberian with delays,  
 To render us his timely friendship vain ;

\* The old editions tell us that it was a notion with some people, that precious stones are drops of dew, condensed and hardened by the warmth of the sun, or by subterranean fires.

† The supposed influence of the moon in depressing the waters under the line into tides towards the poles.

And while his secret soul on Flanders preys,  
He rocks the cradle of the babe of Spain.

9

Such deep designs of empire does he lay  
O'er them, whose cause he seems to take in hand ;  
And prudently would make them lords at sea,  
To whom with ease he can give laws by land.

10

This saw our king ; and long within his breast  
His pensive counsels balanced to and fro ;  
He grieved the land he freed should be oppressed,  
And he less for it than usurpers do.

11

His generous mind the fair ideas drew  
Of fame and honour, which in dangers lay ;  
Where wealth, like fruit on precipices, grew,  
Not to be gathered but by birds of prey.\*

12

The loss and gain each fatally were great ;  
And still his subjects called aloud for war :  
But peaceful kings, o'er martial people set,  
Each other's poise and counterbalance are.

13

He first surveyed the charge with careful eyes,  
Which none but mighty monarchs could maintain ;  
Yet judged, like vapours that from limbecs rise,  
It would in richer showers descend again.

14

At length resolved to assert the watery ball,  
He in himself did whole armadoes bring ;  
Him aged seamen might their master call,  
And choose for general, were he not their king.

---

\* The want of truthfulness in this comparison spoils an image which promises well at first. Fruits on precipices are the common property of all the inhabitants of the air, and are not exclusively gathered by birds of prey.

15

It seems as every ship their sovereign knows,  
 His awful summons they so soon obey ;—  
 So hear the scaly herd when Proteus blows,  
 And so to pasture follow through the sea.

16

To see this fleet upon the ocean move,  
 Angels drew wide the curtains of the skies ;  
 And heaven, as if there wanted lights above,  
 For tapers made two glaring comets rise.\*

17

Whether they unctuous exhalations are,  
 Fired by the sun, or seeming so alone :  
 Or each some more remote and slippery star,  
 Which loses footing when to mortals shown ;

18

Or one, that bright companion of the sun,  
 Whose glorious aspect sealed our new-born king ;  
 And now a round of greater years begun,  
 New influence from his walks of light did bring.

19

Victorious York did first, with famed success,  
 To his known valour make the Dutch give place ;  
 Thus heaven our monarch's fortune did confess,  
 Beginning conquest from his royal race.

\* The close of this stanza, like that which immediately precedes it, has more an air of burlesque than seriousness. It resembles a travestie of Dryden, rather than Dryden himself. The same observation will apply with equal force to the succeeding stanza, in which a 'remote and slippery star' is said to lose its footing. 'Sliding stars' is an image not uncommon amongst the early poets anterior to the age of Elizabeth, and, sometimes, later writers. Thus Surrey in his translations from Virgil :

‘And the divine moon doth eft withhold her light ;  
 And *sliding starres* provoked unto slepe.’

But here, and in all such instances, it is used in the sense of falling. Dryden, in adopting the image, interprets it literally. These lines might have been transplanted, without alteration, into ‘*The Rehearsal*’.

20

But since it was decreed, auspicious king,  
 In Britain's right that thou shouldst wed the main,  
 Heaven, as a gage, would cast some precious thing,  
 And therefore doomed that Lawson should be slain.\*

21

Lawson amongst the foremost met his fate,  
 Whom sea-green Sirens from the rocks lament ;  
 Thus, as an offering for the Grecian state,  
 He first was killed, who first to battle went.

22

Their chief blown up, in air, not waves, expired,†  
 To which his pride presumed to give the law ;  
 The Dutch confessed heaven present, and retired,  
 And all was Britain the wide ocean saw.

\* Rear-Admiral Sir John Lawson, who was killed in the middle, and not late in the action, as stated by Scott.—See Clarendon. Lawson was born at Hull, of obscure parentage, and bred to the sea. He was at first in the merchant service; was afterwards employed by the parliament, and carried a flag under Monk, with whom he co-operated in the restoration of the king, for which he was knighted. In the action here described, acting as rear-admiral of the red, immediately under his royal highness, he received a bullet in the knee, and was sent ashore as far as Deptford or Greenwich, where he lingered a few days, and died. He was considered one of the most experienced seamen of his time.

† The gun-room of the ship of the Dutch Admiral, which lay close to that of the duke, and which the Dutch writers assert had actually boarded it in the course of the action, took fire (either by accident, or by treachery, as some say), and the vessel blew up, destroying upwards of five hundred men. In this miserable way perished the gallant Opdam. Dryden is unjust to his fame in taunting him with pride on this occasion. He entered into the action against his own judgment. Dr. Witte, who suspected him of being attached to the Orange party, resolved upon his ruin, and despatched a peremptory order, in the name of the States, to fight at all events. His own opinion, and that of his officers, was against hazarding an engagement so soon, the English having the advantage of the wind; but he determined to obey his instructions, and summoning a council of war, he addressed them:—‘I am entirely of your sentiments; but here are my orders; to-morrow my head shall be bound with laurel, or with cypress.’ The presentiment of the issue was so strong upon his mind, that he sent his plate ashore before the engagement.—See SOUTHEY & BELL’S *Naval History*, vol. v. p. 265.

## 23

To nearest ports their shattered ships repair,  
 Where by our dreadful cannon they lay awed ;  
 So reverently men quit the open air,  
 Where thunder speaks the angry gods abroad.

## 24

And now approached their fleet from India, fraught  
 With all the riches of the rising sun ;  
 And precious sand from southern climates brought,  
 The fatal regions where the war begun.

## 25

Like hunted castors, conscious of their store,  
 Their way-laid wealth to Norway's coasts they bring ;  
 There first the North's cold bosom spices bore,  
 And winter brooded on the eastern spring.\*

## 26

By the rich scent we found our perfumed prey,†  
 Which, flanked with rocks, did close in covert lie ;  
 And round about their murdering cannon lay,  
 At once to threaten and invite the eye.

## 27

Fiercer than cannon, and than rocks more hard,  
 The English undertake the unequal war :  
 Seven ships alone, by which the port is barred,  
 Besiege the Indies, and all Denmark dare.

\* These lines, and the five following stanzas, refer to the attack of the English fleet on a Dutch convoy, richly laden, from the Indies, which, to avoid a collision with our vessels, made a circuitous route, and finally took shelter in the bay of Bergen. The conduct of that affair, terminating in the withdrawal of the English, has never been clearly explained. Clarendon gives as full an account of it as could be procured at the time, but leaves it still involved in obscurity. The impression made at home may be inferred from the numerous pasquinades to which it gave birth.

† ——‘ the Indies were not found before  
 Those rich perfumes, which, from the happy shore,  
 The winds upon their balmy wings conveyed,  
 Whose guilty sweetness first their world betrayed.’

*Lines to the Chancellor: ante p. 137.*

28

These fight like husbands, but like lovers those :

These fain would keep, and those more fain enjoy ;  
And to such height their frantic passion grows,  
That what both love, both hazard to destroy.

29

Amidst whole heaps of spices lights a ball,  
And now their odours armed against them fly ;  
Some preciously by shattered porcelain fall,  
And some by aromatic splinters die.\*

30

And though by tempests of the prize bereft,  
In heaven's inclemency some ease we find ;  
Our foes we vanquished by our valour left,  
And only yielded to the seas and wind.

31

Nor wholly lost we so deserved a prey ;  
For storms repenting part of it restored :  
Which as a tribute from the Baltic sea,  
The British ocean sent her mighty lord.

32

Go, mortals, now, and vex yourselves in vain  
For wealth, which so uncertainly must come ;  
When what was brought so far, and with such pain,  
Was only kept to lose it nearer home.

33

The son, who twice three months on the ocean tost,  
Prepared to tell what he had passed before,  
Now sees in English ships the Holland coast,  
And parents' arms, in vain, stretched from the shore.

34

This careful husband had been long away,  
Whom his chaste wife and little children mourn ;  
Who on their fingers learned to tell the day,  
On which their father promised to return.

\* Pope's couplet will here at once occur to the reader—

'Or quick effluvia darting through the brain,  
Die of a rose in aromatic pain.'

## 35

Such are the proud designs of human-kind,  
 And so we suffer shipwreck everywhere !  
 Alas, what port can such a pilot find,  
 Who in the night of fate must blindly steer !

## 36

The undistinguished seeds of good and ill,  
 Heaven in his bosom from our knowledge hides ;  
 And draws them in contempt of human skill,  
 Which oft, for friends mistaken, foes provides.

## 37

Let Munster's prelate ever be accurst,  
 In whom we seek the German faith in vain ;  
 Alas, that he should teach the English first,  
 That fraud and avarice in the church could reign !

## 38

Happy, who never trust a stranger's will,  
 Whose friendship's in his interest understood ;  
 Since money given but tempts him to be ill,  
 When power is too remote to make him good.

## 39

Till now, alone the mighty nations strove ;  
 The rest, at gaze, without the lists did stand ;  
 And threatening France, placed like a painted Jove,  
 Kept idle thunder in his lifted hand.

## 40

That eunuch guardian of rich Holland's trade,  
 Who envies us what he wants power to enjoy ;  
 Whose noiseful valour does no foe invade,  
 And weak assistance will his friends destroy.

## 41

Offended that we fought without his leave,  
 He takes this time his secret hate to show ;  
 Which Charles does with a mind so calm receive,  
 As one that neither seeks nor shuns his foe.

42

With France, to aid the Dutch, the Danes unite;  
 France as their tyrant, Denmark as their slave;  
 But when with one three nations join to fight,  
 They silently confess that one more brave.

43

Lewis had chased the English from his shore,  
 But Charles the French as subjects does invite;\*  
 Would Heaven for each some Solomon restore,  
 Who, by their mercy, may decide their right.

44

Were subjects so but only by their choice,  
 And not from birth did forced dominion take,  
 Our prince alone would have the public voice;  
 And all his neighbours' realms would deserts make.

45

He without fear a dangerous war pursues,  
 Which without rashness he began before :  
 As honour made him first the danger chuse,  
 So still he makes it good on virtue's score.

46

The doubled charge his subjects' love supplies,  
 Who in that bounty to themselves are kind :  
 So glad Egyptians see their Nilus rise,  
 And in his plenty their abundance find.

47

With equal power he does two chiefs create,†  
 Two such as each seemed worthiest when alone ;  
 Each able to sustain a nation's fate,  
 Since both had found a greater in their own.

48

Both great in courage, conduct, and in fame,  
 Yet neither envious of the other's praise ;

\* Charles did not exactly 'invite' the French to remain in England after the declaration of war; he permitted them to remain on conditions. In France, on the contrary, the English were expelled.

† Prince Rupert and Monk.

Their duty, faith, and interest too the same,  
Like mighty partners equally they raise.

49

The prince long time had courted fortune's love  
But once possessed did absolutely reign :  
Thus with their Amazons the heroes strove,  
And conquered first those beauties they would gain.

50

The duke beheld, like Scipio, with disdain,  
That Carthage, which he ruined, rise once more ;  
And shook aloft the fasces of the main,  
To fright those slaves with what they felt before.

51

Together to the watery camp they haste,  
Whom matrons passing to their children show ;  
Infants' first vows for them to Heaven are cast,  
And future people bless them as they go.

52

With them no riotous pomp, nor Asian train,  
To infect a navy with their gaudy fears ;  
To make slow fights, and victories but vain ;  
But war, severely, like itself, appears.

53

Diffusive of themselves, where'er they pass,  
They make that warmth in others they expect ;  
Their valour works like bodies on a glass,  
And does its image on their men project.

54

Our fleet divides, and straight the Dutch appear,  
In number, and a famed commander bold :  
The narrow seas can scarce their navy bear,  
Or crowded vessels can their soldiers hold.

55

The duke, less numerous, but in courage more,  
On wings of all the winds to combat flies ;  
His murdering guns a loud defiance roar,  
And bloody crosses on his flag-staffs rise.

56

Both furl their sails, and strip them for the fight;  
 Their folded sheets dismiss the useless air;  
 The Elean plains could boast no nobler fight,  
 When struggling champions did their bodies bare.

57

Borne each by other in a distant line,  
 The sea-built forts in dreadful order move;  
 So vast the noise, as if not fleets did join,  
 But lands unfixed, and floating nations strove.

58

Now passed, on either side they nimbly tack;  
 Both strive to intercept and guide the wind:  
 And, in its eye, more closely they come back,  
 To finish all the deaths they left behind.

59

On high-raised decks the haughty Belgians ride,  
 Beneath whose shade our humble frigates go;  
 Such port the elephant bears, and so defied  
 By the rhinoceros, her unequal foe.

60

And as the build, so different is the fight;  
 Their mounting shot is on our sails designed:  
 Deep in their hulls our deadly bullets light,  
 And through the yielding planks a passage find.\*

61

Our dreaded admiral from far they threat,  
 Whose battered rigging their whole war receives;  
 All bare, like some old oak which tempests beat,  
 He stands, and sees below his scattered leaves.

62

Heroes of old, when wounded, shelter sought;  
 But he who meets all danger with disdain,

---

\* The guns were mounted differently in the opposing vessels, the English, whose guns pointed lower, having the advantage, while the shots of the enemy were dispersed in the air. In the first line of this stanza, we have the word *built* in all the old editions, by which the *build* of the vessels is meant. It has been altered in the text.

Even in their face his ship to anchor brought,  
And steeple-high stood propt upon the main.

63

At this excess of courage, all amazed,  
The foremost of his foes a while withdraw ;  
With such respect in entered Rome they gazed,  
Who on high chairs the god-like fathers saw.

64

And now, as where Patroclus' body lay,  
Here Trojan chiefs advanced, and there the Greek ;  
Ours o'er the duke their pious wings display,  
And theirs the noblest spoils of Britain seek.

65

Meantime his busy mariners he hastes,  
His shattered sails with rigging to restore ;  
And willing pines ascend his broken masts,  
Whose lofty heads rise higher than before.\*

66

Straight to the Dutch he turns his dreadful prow,  
More fierce the important quarrel to decide :  
Like swans, in long array, his vessels show,  
Whose crests advancing do the waves divide.

67

They charge, recharge, and all along the sea  
They drive, and squander the huge Belgian fleet ;  
Berkeley alone, who nearest danger lay,  
Did a like fate with lost Creusa meet.†

68

The night comes on, we eager to pursue  
The combat still, and they ashamed to leave :  
Till the last streaks of dying day withdrew,  
And doubtful moonlight did our rage deceive.

\* Monk had the topmast of his ship shot away in the action, and was compelled to repair the damage under the fire of the enemy.

† Vice-Admiral Sir William Berkeley fought till his ship was riddled, and his crew cut to pieces. After the action he was found dead on a table in his cabin.

## 69

In the English fleet each ship resounds with joy,  
 And loud applause of their great leader's fame ;  
 In fiery dreams the Dutch they still destroy,  
 And, slumbering, smile at the imagined flame.

## 70

Not so the Holland fleet, who, tired and done,  
 Stretched on their decks, like weary oxen, lie ;  
 Faint sweats all down their mighty members run ;  
 Vast bulks, which little souls but ill supply.

## 71

In dreams they fearful precipices tread ;  
 Or, shipwrecked, labour to some distant shore ;  
 Or in dark churches walk among the dead ;  
 They wake with horror, and dare sleep no more.

## 72

The morn they look on with unwilling eyes,  
 Till from their maintop joyful news they hear  
 Of ships, which by their mould bring new supplies,  
 And in their colours Belgian lions bear.

## 73

Our watchful general had discerned from far  
 This mighty succour, which made glad the foe ;  
 He sighed ; but, like a father of the war,  
 His face spake hope, while deep his sorrows flow.

## 74

His wounded men he first sends off to shore,  
 Never, till now, unwilling to obey :  
 They, not their wounds, but want of strength, deplore,  
 And think them happy who with him can stay.

## 75

Then to the rest, 'Rejoice,' said he, 'to-day !'  
 In you the fortune of Great Britain lies ;  
 Among so brave a people, you are they,  
 Whom Heaven has chose to fight for such a prize.

## 76

'If number English courages could quell,  
 We should at first have shunned, not met, our foes,  
 Whose numerous sails the fearful only tell ;  
 Courage from hearts, and not from numbers, grows.'

## 77

He said, nor needed more to say ; with haste,  
 To their known stations, cheerfully they go ;  
 And, all at once, disdaining to be last,  
 Solicit every gale to meet the foe.

## 78

Nor did the encouraged Belgians long delay,  
 But, bold in others, not themselves, they stood :  
 So thick, our navy scarce could steer their way,  
 But seemed to wander in a moving wood.

## 79

Our little fleet was now engaged so far,  
 That, like the sword-fish in the whale they fought ;  
 The combat only seemed a civil war,  
 Till through their bowels we our passage wrought.

## 80

Never had valour, no, not ours, before  
 Done ought like this upon the land or main ;  
 Where, not to be o'ercome was to do more  
 Than all the conquests former kings did gain.

## 81

The mighty ghosts of our great Harries rose,  
 And armed Edwards looked with anxious eyes,  
 To see this fleet among unequal foes, [rise.  
 By which fate promised them their Charles should

## 82

Meantime the Belgians tack upon our rear,  
 And raking chase-guns through our sterns they send ;  
 Close by, their fire-ships, like jackals, appear,  
 Who on their lions for the prey attend.

## 83

Silent, in smoke of cannon, they come on :  
 Such vapours once did fiery Cacus hide :  
 In these, the height of pleased revenge is shown,  
 Who burn contented by another's side.

## 84

Sometimes from fighting squadrons of each fleet,  
 Deceived themselves, or to preserve some friend,  
 Two grappling *Ætnas* on the ocean meet,  
 And English fires with Belgian flames contend.

## 85

Now, at each tack, our little fleet grows less ;  
 And, like maimed fowl, swim lagging on the main ;  
 Their greater loss their numbers scarce confess,  
 While they lose cheaper than the English gain.

## 86

Have you not seen, when, whistled from the fist,  
 Some falcon stoops at what her eye designed,  
 And with her eagerness the quarry missed,  
 Straight flies at check, and clips it down the wind ?

## 87

The dastard crow, that to the wood made wing,\*  
 And sees the groves no shelter can afford,  
 With her loud caws her craven kind does bring,  
 Who, safe in numbers, cuff the noble bird.

## 88

Among the Dutch thus Albemarle did fare :  
 He could not conquer, and disdained to fly ;  
 Past hope of safety, 'twas his latest care,  
 Like falling Cæsar, decently to die.

## 89

Yet pity did his manly spirit move,  
 To see those perish who so well had fought ;

\* 'Light thickens ; and the crow  
 Makes wing to the rooky wood.'

And generously with his despair he strove,  
Resolved to live till he their safety wrought.

90

Let other muses write his prosperous fate,  
Of conquered nations tell, and kings restored :  
But mine shall sing of his eclipsed estate,  
Which, like the sun's, more wonders does afford.

91

He drew his mighty frigates all before,  
On which the foe his fruitless force employs ;  
His weak ones deep into his rear he bore,  
Remote from guns, as sick men from the noise.\*

92

His fiery cannon did their passage guide,  
And following smoke obscured them from the foe :  
Thus Israel, safe from the Egyptian's pride,  
By flaming pillars, and by clouds did go.

93

Elsewhere the Belgian force we did defeat,  
But here our courages did theirs subdue ;  
So Xenophon once led that famed retreat,  
Which first the Asian empire overthrew.

94

The foe approached ; and one for his bold sin  
Was sunk ; as he that touched the ark was slain :  
The wild waves mastered him, and sucked him in,  
And smiling eddies dimpled on the main.

\* Scott observes, that Dryden has inverted the order of the retreat, placing the disabled ships in the rear, where they must inevitably have been taken, instead of placing them in advance, where they were covered from pursuit by Monk, who took the rear himself, with his ablest vessels. The manner in which Dryden describes the 'mighty' frigates 'before,' and the 'weak' ones in the 'rear,' appears, at the first glance, to justify this criticism ; but a closer examination of the context will show that Dryden meant the very reverse, however he may have confounded his meaning by a confusion of terms. It is evident enough in the stanza that the 'mighty' frigates bore the whole fire of the pursuers, and must, therefore, have been in the rear ; while the 'weak' were in advance, 'remote' from their guns.

## 95

This seen, the rest at awful distance stood :

As if they had been there as servants set,  
To stay, or to go on, as he thought good,  
And not pursue, but wait on his retreat.

## 96

So Libyan huntsmen, on some sandy plain,  
From shady coverts roused, the lion chase :  
The kingly beast roars out with loud disdain,  
And slowly moves, unknowing to give place.

## 97

But if some one approach to dare his force,  
He swings his tail, and swiftly turns him round ;  
With one paw seizes on his trembling horse,  
And with the other tears him to the ground.

## 98

Amidst these toils succeeds the balmy night ;  
Now hissing waters the quenched guns restore :  
And weary waves, withdrawing from the fight,  
Lie lulled and panting on the silent shore.

## 99

The moon shone clear on the becalmed flood,  
Where, while her beams like glittering silver play,  
Upon the deck our careful general stood,  
And deeply mused on the succeeding day.

## 100

'That happy sun,' said he, 'will rise again,  
Who twice victorious did our navy see ;  
And I alone must view him rise in vain,  
Without one ray of all his star for me.'

## 101

Yet, like an English general will I die,  
And all the ocean make my spacious grave :  
Women and cowards on the land may lie ;  
The sea's a tomb that's proper for the brave.'

102

Restless he passed the remnant of the night,  
 Till the fresh air proclaimed the morning nigh ;  
 And burning ships, the martyrs of the fight,  
 With paler fires beheld the eastern sky.

103

But now his stores of ammunition spent,  
 His naked valour is his only guard ;  
 Rare thunders are from his dumb cannon sent,  
 And solitary guns are scarcely heard.

104

Thus far had fortune power, here forced to stay,  
 No longer durst with virtue be at strife ;  
 This as a ransom Albemarle did pay,  
 For all the glories of so great a life.

105

For now brave Rupert from afar appears,  
 Whose waving streamers the glad general knows ;  
 With full-spread sails his eager navy steers,  
 And every ship in swift proportion grows.

106

The anxious prince had heard the cannon long,  
 And, from that length of time, dire omens drew  
 Of English overmatched, and Dutch too strong,  
 Who never fought three days, but to pursue.

107

Then, as an eagle, who with pious care  
 Was beating widely on the wing for prey,  
 To her now silent airy does repair,  
 And finds her callow infants forced away ;

108

Stung with her love, she stoops upon the plain,  
 The broken air loud whistling as she flies ;  
 She stops and listens, and shoots forth again,  
 And guides her pinions by her young ones' cries.

## 109

With such kind passion hastes the prince to fight,  
 And spreads his flying canvas to the sound;  
 Him, whom no danger, were he there, could fright,  
 Now absent, every little noise can wound.

## 110

As in a drought the thirsty creatures cry,  
 And gape upon the gathered clouds for rain;  
 And first the martlet meets it in the sky,  
 And with wet wings joys all the feathered train.

## 111

With such glad hearts did our despairing men  
 Salute the appearance of the prince's fleet;  
 And each ambitiously would claim the ken,  
 That with first eyes did distant safety meet.

## 112

The Dutch, who came like greedy hinds before  
 To reap the harvest their ripe ears did yield,  
 Now look like those, when rolling thunders roar,  
 And sheets of lightning blast the standing field.

## 113

Full in the prince's passage, hills of sand,  
 And dangerous flats, in secret ambush lay;  
 Where the false tides skim o'er the covered land,  
 And seamen, with dissembled depths, betray.

## 114

The wily Dutch, who, like fallen angels, feared  
 This new Messiah's coming, there did wait,  
 And round the verge their braving vessels steered,  
 To tempt his courage with so fair a bait.

## 115

But he, unmoved, contemns their idle threat,  
 Secure of fame whene'er he please to fight;  
 His cold experience tempers all his heat,  
 And inbred worth doth boasting valour slight.

## 116

Heroic virtue did his actions guide,  
And he the substance, not the appearance, chose ;  
To rescue one such friend he took more pride,  
Than to destroy whole thousands of such foes.

## 117

But when approached, in strict embraces bound,  
Rupert and Albemarle together grow ;  
He joys to have his friend in safety found,  
Which he to none but to that friend would owe.

## 118

The cheerful soldiers, with new stores supplied,  
Now long to execute their spleenful will ;  
And in revenge for those three days they tried,  
Wish one, like Joshua's, when the sun stood still.

## 119

Thus reinforced, against the adverse fleet,  
Still doubling ours, brave Rupert leads the way ;  
With the first blushes of the morn they meet,  
And bring night back upon the new-born day.

## 120

His presence soon blows up the kindling fight,  
And his loud guns speak thick like angry men ;  
It seemed as slaughter had been breathed all night,  
And death new pointed his dull dart again.

## 121

The Dutch too well his mighty conduct knew,  
And matchless courage, since the former fight ;  
Whose navy like a stiff-stretched cord did show,  
Till he bore in, and bent them into flight.

## 122

The wind he shares, while half their fleet offends  
His open side, and high above him shows ;  
Upon the rest at pleasure he descends,  
And doubly harmed he double harms bestows.

## 123

Behind, the general mends his weary pace,  
And sullenly to his revenge he sails;  
So glides some trodden serpent on the grass,  
And long behind his wounded volume trails.

## 124

The increasing sound is borne to either shore,  
And for their stakes the throwing nations fear;  
Their passions double with the cannons' roar,  
And with warm wishes each man combats there.

## 125

Plied thick and close as when the fight begun,  
Their huge unwieldy navy wastes away:  
So sicken waning moons too near the sun,  
And blunt their crescents on the edge of day.

## 126

And now, reduced on equal terms to fight,  
Their ships like wasted patrimonies show;  
Where the thin scattering trees admit the light,  
And shun each other's shadows as they grow.

## 127

The warlike prince had severed from the rest  
Two giant ships, the pride of all the main;  
Which with his one so vigorously he pressed,  
And flew so home, they could not rise again.

## 128

Already battered, by his lee they lay;  
In vain upon the passing winds they call;  
The passing winds through their torn canvass play,  
And flagging sails on heartless sailors fall.

## 129

Their opened sides receive a gloomy light,  
Dreadful as day let into shades below;  
Without, grim death rides barefaced in their sight,  
And urges entering billows as they flow.

## 130

When one dire shot, the last they could supply,  
 Close by the board the prince's main-mast bore :  
 All three, now helpless, by each other lie,  
 And this offends not, and those fear no more.

## 131

So have I seen some fearful hare maintain  
 A course, till tired before the dog she lay ;  
 Who, stretched behind her, pants upon the plain,  
 Past power to kill, as she to get away.

## 132

With his lolled tongue he faintly licks his prey ;  
 His warm breath blows her flix\* up as she lies ;  
 She, trembling, creeps upon the ground away,  
 And looks back to him with beseeching eyes.

## 133

The prince unjustly does his stars accuse,  
 Which hindered him to push his fortune on ;  
 For what they to his courage did refuse,  
 By mortal valour never must be done.

## 134

This lucky hour the wise Batavian takes,  
 And warns his tattered fleet to follow home ;  
 Proud to have so got off with equal stakes,  
 Where 'twas a triumph not to be o'ercome.

## 135

The general's force as kept alive by fight,  
 Now not opposed, no longer can pursue ;  
 Lasting 'till Heaven had done his courage right ;  
 When he had conquered, he his weakness knew.

\* *Flix*, the fur of the hare. It is not, as Scott supposes, a corruption. The word is still used in some of the provincial dialects. It also meant flux. Thus old Tusser employs it in giving directions for gathering sloes in October :

' And keep them in bed-straw, or still on the bough,  
 To stay both the *flix*, of thyself and thy cow.'

136

He casts a frown on the departing foe,  
 And sighs to see him quit the watery field ;  
 His stern fixed eyes no satisfaction show,  
 For all the glories which the fight did yield.

137

Though, as when fiends did miracles avow,  
 He stands confessed e'en by the boastful Dutch ;  
 He only does his conquest disavow,  
 And thinks too little what they found too much.

138

Returned, he with the fleet resolved to stay ;  
 No tender thoughts of home his heart divide ;  
 Domestic joys and cares he puts away, [guide.\*]  
 For realms are households which the great must

139

As those who unripe veins in mines explore,  
 On the rich bed again the warm turf lay,  
 Till time digests the yet imperfect ore,  
 And know it will be gold another day ;

140

So looks our monarch on this early fight,  
 The essay and rudiments of great success ;  
 Which all-maturing time must bring to light,  
 While he, like Heaven, does each day's labour bless.

141

Heaven ended not the first or second day,  
 Yet each was perfect to the work designed :  
 God and kings' work, when they their work survey,  
 A passive aptness in all subjects find.

142

In burdened vessels first with speedy care,†  
 His plenteous stores do seasoned timber send ;

\* The law of conduct here indicated for public men was anticipated by Confucius, who lays it down as a first principle in his Code of Government—‘ Rule a State as you rule a family.’

† Dr. Johnson takes exception to the animated description in the succeeding stanzas of the process of repairing the ships in the dock-

Thither the brawny carpenters repair,  
And as the surgeons of maimed ships attend.

## 143

With cord and canvass from rich Hamburgh sent,  
His navy's molted wings he imps once more;  
Tall Norway fir, their masts in battle spent,  
And English oak, sprung leaks and planks, restore.

## 144

All hands employed, the royal work grows warm;  
Like labouring bees on a long summer's day,  
Some sound the trumpet for the rest to swarm,  
And some on bells of tasted lilies play.

## 145

With gluey wax some new foundations lay,  
Of virgin-combs, which from the roof are hung;  
Some armed within doors, upon duty stay,  
Or tend the sick, or educate the young.

## 146

So here some pick out bullets from the sides,  
Some drive old oakum through each seam and rift:  
Their left hand does the calking-iron guide,  
The rattling mallet with the right they lift.

## 147

With boiling pitch another near at hand,  
From friendly Sweden brought, the seams in-stops:  
Which well paid o'er, the salt sea waves withstand,  
And shakes them from the rising beak in drops.

---

yards. ‘It is a general rule in poetry,’ he observes, ‘that all appropriated terms of art should be sunk in general expressions, because poetry is to speak an universal language;’ and, after quoting a portion of the passage, he adds, ‘I suppose there is not one term which every reader would not wish away.’ I should hesitate in venturing to dissent from this *dictum*, if I were not in some degree fortified by the authority of Dr. Johnson himself, who, in his eloquent preface to Shakspeare, observes, ‘He that will understand Shakspeare must not be content to study him in the closet, he must look for his meaning sometimes among the sports of the field, and sometimes among the manufactures of the shop.’

## 148

Some the galled ropes with dauby marline bind,  
 Or sere-cloth masts with strong tarpauling coats :  
 To try new shrouds, one mounts into the wind,  
 And one below their ease or stiffness notes.

## 149

Our careful monarch stands in person by,  
 His new cast cannons' firmness to explore ;  
 The strength of big-corned powder loves to try,  
 And ball and cartridge sorts for every bore.

## 150

Each day brings fresh supplies of arms and men,  
 And ships which all last winter were abroad ;  
 And such as fitted since the fight had been,  
 Or new from stocks, were fallen into the road.

## 151

The goodly London, in her gallant trim,  
 The Phoenix-daughter of the vanished old,  
 Like a rich bride does to the ocean swim,  
 And on her shadow rides in floating gold.

## 152

Her flag aloft, spread ruffling to the wind,  
 And sanguine streamers, seem the flood to fire ;  
 The weaver, charmed with what his loom designed,  
 Goes on to sea, and knows not to retire.

## 153

With roomy decks, her guns of mighty strength,  
 Whose low-laid mouths each mounting billow laves :  
 Deep in her draught, and warlike in her length,  
 She seems a sea-wasp flying on the waves.

## 154

This martial present, piously designed,  
 The loyal city give their best-loved king :  
 And, with a bounty ample as the wind,  
 Built, fitted, and maintained, to aid him bring.

155

By viewing nature, nature's handmaid, art,  
 Makes mighty things from small beginnings grow :  
 Thus fishes first to shipping did impart,  
 Their tail the rudder, and their head the prow.

156

Some log, perhaps, upon the waters swam,  
 An useless drift, which, rudely cut within,  
 And hollowed, first a floating trough became,  
 And cross some rivulet passage did begin.

157

In shipping such as this, the Irish kern,  
 And untaught Indian, on the stream did glide ;  
 Ere sharp-keeled boats to stem the flood did learn,  
 Or fin-like oars did spread from either side.

158

Add but a sail, and Saturn so appeared,  
 When from lost empire he to exile went,  
 And with the golden age to Tiber steered,  
 Where coin and commerce first he did invent.

159

Rude as their ships was navigation then ;  
 No useful compass or meridian known ;  
 Coasting, they kept the land within their ken,  
 And knew no north but when the pole-star shone.

160

Of all who since have used the open sea,  
 Than the bold English none more fame have won ;  
 Beyond the ear, and out of heaven's high way,  
 They make discoveries where they see no sun.

161

But what so long in vain, and yet unknown,  
 By poor mankind's benighted wit is sought,  
 Shall in this age to Britain first be shown,  
 . And hence be to admiring nations taught.

## 162

The ebbs of tides, and their mysterious flow,  
 We, as arts' elements, shall understand ;  
 And as by line upon the ocean go,  
 Whose paths shall be familiar as the land.

## 163

Instructed ships shall sail to quick commerce,  
 By which remotest regions are allied ;  
 Which makes one city of the universe,  
 Where some may gain, and all may be supplied.

## 164

Then we upon our globe's last verge shall go,  
 And view the ocean leaning on the sky :  
 From thence our rolling neighbours we shall know,  
 And on the lunar world securely pry.

## 165

This I foretel, from your auspicious care,  
 Who, great in search of God and nature, grow ;  
 Who best your wise Creator's praise declare,  
 Since best to praise his works is best to know.

## 166

O, truly royal ! who behold the law  
 And rule of beings in your Maker's mind ;  
 And thence, like limbecs, rich ideas draw,  
 To fit the levelled use of human kind.

## 167

But first the toils of war we must endure,  
 And from the injurious Dutch redeem the seas ;  
 War makes the valiant of his right secure,  
 And gives up fraud to be chastised with ease.

## 168

Already were the Belgians on our coast,  
 Whose fleet more mighty every day became  
 By late success, which they did falsely boast,  
 And now, by first appearing, seemed to claim.

## 169

Designing, subtle, diligent, and close,  
They knew to manage war with wise delay :  
Yet all those arts their vanity did cross,  
And by their pride their prudence did betray.

## 170

Nor staid the English long ; but, well supplied,  
Appear as numerous as the insulting foe ;  
The combat now by courage must be tried,  
And the success the braver nation show.

## 171

There was the Plymouth squadron now come in,  
Which in the Straits last winter was abroad ;  
Which twice on Biscay's working bay had been,  
And on the midland sea the French had awed.

## 172

Old expert Allen, loyal all along,  
Famed for his action on the Smyrna fleet ;  
And Holmes, whose name shall live in epic song,  
While music numbers, or while verse has feet.

## 173

Holmes, the Achatés of the general's fight ;  
Who first bewitched our eyes with Guinea gold ;  
As once old Cato, in the Roman fight,  
The tempting fruits of Afric did unfold.\*

## 174

With him went Spragge, as bountiful as brave,  
Whom his high courage to command had brought ;  
Harman, who did the twice-fired Harry save,  
And in his burning ship undaunted fought.

---

\* A recurrence to the allusion with which the satire on the Dutch concludes. Dryden enumerates in these stanzas the principal officers in command of the fleet, and incurred some ridicule for ascribing literary talents to Captain Hollis, of the Antelope, who lost a hand in this engagement. The editor of Tonson's edition is obliged to 'confess himself a stranger' to Hollis's writings. That Hollis's ambition did not lie in the pen may be inferred from a singular passage in his will, declaring that he desired no other monument but that raised by his sword.

## 175

Young Hollis, on a Muse by Mars begot,  
 Born, Cæsar-like, to write and act great deeds:  
 Impatient to revenge his fatal shot,  
 His right hand doubly to his left succeeds.

## 176

Thousands were there in darker fame that dwell,  
 Whose deeds some nobler poem shall adorn;  
 And though to me unknown, they sure fought well,  
 Whom Rupert led, and who were British born.

## 177

Of every size, an hundred fighting sail;  
 So vast the navy now at anchor rides,  
 That underneath it the pressed waters fail,  
 And with its weight it shoulders off the tides.

## 178

Now, anchors weighed, the seamen shout so shrill,  
 That heaven, and earth, and the wide ocean rings:  
 A breeze from westward waits their sails to fill,  
 And rests in those high beds his downy wings.

## 179

The wary Dutch this gathering storm foresaw,  
 And durst not bide it on the English coast;  
 Behind their treacherous shallows they withdraw,  
 And there lay snares to catch the British host.

## 180

So the false spider, when her nets are spread,  
 Deep ambushed in her silent den does lie;  
 And feels far off the trembling of her thread,  
 Whose filmy cord should bind the struggling fly

## 181

Then, if at last she find him fast beset,  
 She issues forth, and runs along her loom:  
 She joys to touch the captive in her net,  
 And drag the little wretch in triumph home.

## 182

The Belgians hoped, that, with disordered haste,  
 Our deep cut keels upon the sands might run ;  
 Or, if with caution leisurely were past,  
 Their numerous gross might charge us one by one.

## 183

But, with a fore-wind pushing them above,  
 And swelling tide that heaved them from below,  
 O'er the blind flats our warlike squadrons move,  
 And with spread sails to welcome battle go.

## 184

It seemed as there the British Neptune stood,  
 With all his hosts of waters at command ;  
 Beneath them to submit the officious flood ;  
 And with his trident shoved them off the sand.

## 185

To the pale foes they suddenly draw near,  
 And summon them to unexpected fight :  
 They start like murderers when ghosts appear,  
 And draw their curtains in the dead of night.\*

## 186

Now van to van the foremost squadrons meet,  
 The midmost battles hastening up behind :  
 Who view far off the storm of falling sleet,  
 And hear their thunder rattling in the wind.

## 187

At length the adverse admirals appear ;  
 The two bold champions of each country's right ;  
 Their eyes describe the lists as they come near,  
 And draw the lines of death before they fight.

## 188

The distance judged for shot of every size,  
 The linstocks touch, the ponderous ball expires :  
 The vigorous seaman every port-hole plies,  
 And adds his heart to every gun he fires !

\* ‘Drew Priam’s curtain in the dead of night.’

*Henry IV. Second Part.*

## 189

Fierce was the fight on the proud Belgians' side,  
 For honour, which they seldom sought before ;  
 But now they by their own vain boasts were tied,  
 And forced, at least in show, to prize it more.

## 190

But sharp remembrance on the English part,  
 And shame of being matched by such a foe,  
 Rouse conscious virtue up in every heart,  
 And seeming to be stronger, makes them so.

## 191

Nor long the Belgians could that fleet sustain,  
 Which did two generals' fates, and Cæsar's bear ;  
 Each several ship a victory did gain,  
 As Rupert or as Albemarle were there.

## 192

Their battered admiral too soon withdrew,  
 Unthanked by ours for his unfinished fight ;  
 But he the minds of his Dutch masters knew,  
 Who called that providence which we called flight.

## 193

Never did men more joyfully obey,  
 Or sooner understood the sign to fly ;  
 With such alacrity they bore away,  
 As if, to praise them, all the states stood by.

## 194

O famous leader of the Belgian fleet ! \*  
 Thy monument, inscribed, such praise shall wear  
 As Varro, timely flying, once did meet,  
 Because he did not of his Rome despair.

## 195

Behold that navy, which, a while before,  
 Provoked the tardy English close to fight ;  
 Now draw their beaten vessels close to shore,  
 As larks lie, dared, to shun the hobby's flight.

---

\* De Ruyter.

196

Whoe'er would English monuments survey,  
 In other records may our courage know ;  
 But let them hide the story of this day,  
 Whose fame was blemished by too base a foe.

197

Or, if too busily they will enquire  
 Into a victory which we disdain ;  
 Then let them know, the Belgians did retire  
 Before the patron saint of injured Spain.\*

198

Repenting England, this revengeful day,  
 To Philip's manes did an offering bring :  
 England, which first, by leading them astray,  
 Hatched up rebellion, to destroy her king.

199

Our fathers bent their baneful industry  
 To check a monarchy that slowly grew ;  
 But did not France or Holland's fate foresee,  
 Whose rising power to swift dominion flew.

200

In fortune's empire blindly thus we go,  
 And wander after pathless destiny ;  
 Whose dark resorts since prudence cannot know,  
 In vain it would provide for what shall be.

201

But whate'er English to the blessed shall go,  
 And the fourth Harry, or first Orange, meet ;  
 Find him disowning of a Bourbon foe,  
 And him detesting a Batavian fleet.

202

Now on their coasts our conquering navy rides,  
 Waylays their merchants, and their land besets ;  
 Each day new wealth without their care provides ;  
 They lie asleep with prizes in their nets.

---

\* The action took place on St. James's day.

## 203

So, close behind some promontory lie  
 The huge leviathans to attend their prey ;  
 And give no chase, but swallow in the fry,  
 Which through their gaping jaws mistake the way.

## 204

Nor was this all ; in ports and roads remote,  
 Destructive fires among whole fleets we send ;  
 Triumphant flames upon the water float,  
 And out-bound ships at home their voyage end.

## 205

Those various squadrons, variously designed,  
 Each vessel freighted with a several load,  
 Each squadron waiting for a several wind,  
 All find but one,—to burn them in the road.\*

## 206

Some bound for Guinea, golden sand to find,  
 Bore all the gauds the simple natives wear ;  
 Some, for the pride of Turkish courts designed,  
 For folded turbans, finest Holland bear.

## 207

Some, English wool, vexed in a Belgian loom,  
 And into cloth of spungy softness made,  
 Did into France, or colder Denmark, doom,  
 To ruin with worse ware our staple trade.

## 208

Our greedy seamen rummage every hold,  
 Smile on the booty of each wealthier chest ;  
 And, as the priests who with their gods make bold,  
 Take what they like, and sacrifice the rest.†

\* Immediately after the battle, the English ships proceeded to the Dutch coast, and destroyed, chiefly by fire, a large fleet of merchant vessels, richly laden, some homeward and some outward bound. Only eight or nine escaped out of 170 vessels.

† This is inaccurately stated. Sir Robert Holmes, who commanded on this occasion, issued a strict order against pillage, and took active measures for its prevention.

209

But, ah! how insincere are all our joys!

Which sent from heaven, like lightning make no stay;  
Their palling taste the journey's length destroys,  
Or grief, sent post, o'er takes them on the way.

210

Swelled with our late successes on the foe,

Which France and Holland wanted power to cross,  
We urge an unseen fate to lay us low,  
And feed their envious eyes with English loss.

211

Each element His dread command obeys,

Who makes or ruins with a smile or frown;  
Who, as by one he did our nation raise,  
So now he with another pulls us down.

212

Yet, London, empress of the northern clime,

By an high fate thou greatly didst expire;  
Great as the world's, which, at the death of time,  
Must fall, and rise a nobler frame, by fire.\*

213

As when some dire usurper Heaven provides,

To scourge his country with a lawless sway;  
His birth, perhaps some petty village hides,  
And sets his cradle out of fortune's way.

214

Till, fully ripe, his swelling fate breaks out,

And hurries him to mighty mischiefs on;

---

\* The verses that follow, to the conclusion of the poem, present a vivid picture of the devastations of the great fire and the sufferings of the people, thousands of whom fled from their burning houses into the fields, where they formed a rude encampment of huts. According to the inscription on the Monument, no less than 13,000 dwelling-houses, and 400 streets, besides 89 churches, and a vast number of public buildings, were destroyed, the ruins covering an extent of 436 acres. London, however, rose 'a nobler frame by fire,' and the ill-contrived wooden tenements, narrow passages, and crooked streets, which had been reduced to ashes, made way for a new order of houses, built with magnificence, uniformity, and durability of material.

His prince, surprised at first, no ill could doubt,  
And wants the power to meet it when 'tis known.

215

Such was the rise of this prodigious fire,  
Which in mean buildings first obscurely bred ;  
From thence did soon to open streets aspire,  
And straight to palaces and temples spread.

216

The diligence of trades, and noiseful gain,  
And luxury more late, asleep were laid ;  
All was the night's; and, in her silent reign,  
No sound the rest of nature did invade.

217

In this deep quiet, from what source unknown,  
Those seeds of fire their fatal birth disclose ;  
And, first, few scattering sparks about were blown,  
Big with the flames that to our ruin rose.

218

Then in some close-pent room it crept along,  
And, smouldering as it went, in silence fed ;  
Till the infant monster, with devouring strong,  
Walked boldly upright with exalted head.

219

Now, like some rich or mighty murderer,  
Too great for prison, which he breaks with gold ;  
Who fresher for new mischiefs does appear,  
And dares the world to tax him with the old :

220

So 'scapes the insulting fire his narrow jail,  
And makes small outlets into open air ;  
There the fierce winds his tender force assail,  
And beat him downward to his first repair.

221

The winds, like crafty courtezans, withheld  
His flames from burning, but to blow them more :  
And, every fresh attempt, he is repelled  
With faint denials, weaker than before.

## 222

And now, no longer letted of his prey,  
 He leaps up at it with enraged desire ;  
 O'erlooks the neighbours with a wide survey,  
 And nods at every house his threatening fire.

## 223

The ghosts of traitors from the bridge descend,  
 With bold fanatic spectres to rejoice ;  
 About the fire into a dance they bend,  
 And sing their sabbath notes with feeble voice.

## 224

Our guardian angel saw them where they sate,  
 Above the palace of our slumbering king ;  
 He sighed, abandoning his charge to fate,  
 And, drooping, oft looked back upon the wing.

## 225

At length the crackling noise and dreadful blaze  
 Called up some waking lover to the sight ;  
 And long it was ere he the rest could raise,  
 Whose heavy eyelids yet were full of night.

## 226

The next to danger, hot pursued by fate,  
 Half-clothed, half-naked, hastily retire ;  
 And frightened mothers strike their breasts too late,  
 For helpless infants left amidst the fire.

## 227

Their cries soon waken all the dwellers near ;  
 Now murmuring noises rise in every street ;  
 The more remote run stumbling with their fear,  
 And in the dark men justle as they meet.

## 228

So weary bees in little cells repose ;  
 But if night-robbers lift the well-stored hive,  
 An humming through their waxen city grows,  
 And out upon each other's wings they drive.

## 229

Now streets grow thronged, and busy as by day ;  
 Some run for buckets to the hallowed choir ;  
 Some cut the pipes, and some the engines play ;  
 And some, more bold, mount ladders to the fire.

## 230

In vain ; for from the east a Belgian wind  
 His hostile breath through the dry rafters sent ;  
 The flames, impelled, soon left their foes behind,  
 And forward with a wanton fury went.

## 231

A quay of fire ran all along the shore,  
 And lightened all the river with a blaze ;  
 The wakened tides began again to roar,  
 And wondering fish in shining waters gaze.

## 232

Old Father Thames raised up his reverend head,  
 But feared the fate of Simois would return ;  
 Deep in his ooze he sought his sedgy bed,  
 And shrunk his waters back into his urn.

## 233

The fire, meantime, walks in a broader gross ;  
 To either hand his wings he opens wide ;  
 He wades the streets, and straight he reaches cross,  
 And plays his longing flames on the other side.

## 234

At first they warm, then scorch, and then they take ;  
 Now with long necks from side to side they feed ;  
 At length, grown strong, their mother-fire forsake,  
 And a new colony of flames succeed.

## 235

To every nobler portion of the town  
 The curling billows roll their restless tide ;  
 In parties now they straggle up and down,  
 As armies, unopposed, for prey divide.

## 236

One mighty squadron with a side-wind sped,  
Through narrow lanes his cumbered fire does haste ;  
By powerful charms of gold and silver led,  
The Lombard bankers and the 'Change to waste.

## 237

Another backward to the Tower would go,  
And slowly eats his way against the wind ;  
But the main body of the marching foe  
Against the imperial palace is designed.

## 238

Now day appears ; and with the day, the king,  
Whose early care had robbed him of his rest ;  
Far off, the cracks of falling houses ring,  
And shrieks of subjects pierce his tender breast.

## 239

Near as he draws, thick harbingers of smoke,  
With gloomy pillars, cover all the place ;  
Whose little intervals of night are broke  
By sparks, that drive against his sacred face.

## 240

More than his guards his sorrows made him known,  
And pious tears, which down his cheeks did shower :  
The wretched in his grief forgot their own ;  
So much the pity of a king has power. . .

## 241

He wept the flames of what he loved so well,  
And what so well had merited his love ;  
For never prince in grace did more excel,  
Or royal city more in duty strove.

## 242

Nor with an idle care did he behold :  
Subjects may grieve, but monarchs must redress ;  
He cheers the fearful, and commends the bold,  
And makes despairers hope for good success.

## 243

Himself directs what first is to be done,  
 And orders all the succours which they bring ;  
 The helpful and the good about him run,  
 And form an army worthy such a king.

## 244

He sees the dire contagion spread so fast,  
 That, where it seizes, all relief is vain ;  
 And therefore must unwillingly lay waste  
 That country, which would else the foe maintain.

## 245

The powder blows up all before the fire ;  
 The amazéd flames stand gathered on a heap ;  
 And from the precipice's brink retire,  
 Afraid to venture on so large a leap.

## 246

Thus fighting fires a while themselves consume,  
 But straight, like Turks forced on to win or die,  
 They first lay tender bridges of their fume,  
 And o'er the breach in unctuous vapours fly.

## 247

Part stay for passage, till a gust of wind  
 Ships o'er their forces in a shining sheet ;  
 Part creeping under ground, their journey blind,  
 And climbing from below, their fellows meet.

## 248

Thus to some desert plain, or old wood-side,  
 Dire night-hags come from far to dance their round ;  
 And o'er broad rivers on their fiends they ride,  
 Or sweep in clouds above the blasted ground.

## 249

No help avails : for, hydra-like, the fire  
 Lifts up his hundred heads to aim his way ;  
 And scarce the wealthy can one-half retire,  
 Before he rushes in to share the prey.

## 250

The rich grow suppliant, and the poor grow proud :  
 Those offer mighty gain, and these ask more :  
 So void of pity is the ignoble crowd,  
 When others' ruin may increase their store.

## 251

As those who live by shores with joy behold  
 Some wealthy vessel split or stranded nigh ;  
 And from the rocks leap down for shipwrecked gold,  
 And seek the tempests which the others fly :

## 252

So these but wait the owners' last despair,  
 And what's permitted to the flames, invade ;  
 Even from their jaws they hungry morsels tear,  
 And on their backs the spoils of Vulcan lade.

## 253

The days were all in this lost labour spent ;  
 And when the weary king gave place to-night,  
 His beams he to his royal brother lent,  
 And so shone still in his reflective light.

## 254

Night came, but without darkness or repose,  
 A dismal picture of the general doom ;  
 Where souls distracted when the trumpet blows,  
 And half unready, with their bodies come.

## 255

Those who have homes, when home they do repair,  
 To a last lodging call their wandering friends :  
 Their short uneasy sleeps are broke with care,  
 To look how near their own destruction tends.

## 256

Those who have none sit round where once it was,  
 And with full eyes each wonted room require ;  
 Haunting the yet warm ashes of the place,  
 As murdered men walk where they did expire.

## 257

Some stir up coals, and watch the vestal fire;  
 Others, in vain from sight of ruin run ;  
 And, while through burning labyrinths they retire,  
 With loathing eyes repeat what they would shun.

## 258

The most, in fields, like herded beasts, lie down,  
 To dews obnoxious, on the grassy floor ;  
 And while their babes in sleep their sorrows drown,  
 Sad parents watch the remnants of their store.

## 259

While by the motion of the flames they guess  
 What streets are burning now, and what are near ;  
 An infant, waking, to the paps would press,  
 And meets, instead of milk, a falling tear.

## 260

No thought can ease them but their sovereign's care,  
 Whose praise the afflicted as their comfort sing ;  
 E'en those whom want might drive to just despair,  
 Think life a blessing under such a king.

## 261

Mean time he sadly suffers in their grief,  
 Out-weeps an hermit, and out-prays a saint ;  
 All the long night he studies their relief,  
 How they may be supplied, and he may want.

## 262

'O God,' said he, 'thou patron of my days,  
 Guide of my youth in exile and distress !  
 Who me, unfriended, brought'st by wond'rous ways,  
 The kingdom of my fathers to possess :

## 263

'Be thou my judge, with what unwearied care  
 I since have laboured for my people's good ;  
 To bind the bruises of a civil war,  
 And stop the issues of their wasting blood.

## 264

'Thou, who hast taught me to forgive the ill,  
And recompense as friends, the good misled;  
If mercy be a precept of thy will,  
Return that mercy on thy servant's head.

## 265

'Or if my heedless youth has stepped astray,  
Too soon forgetful of thy gracious hand,  
On me alone thy just displeasure lay,  
But take thy judgments from this mourning land.

## 266

'We all have sinned; and thou hast laid us low,  
As humble earth from whence at first we came:  
Like flying shades before the clouds we show,  
And shrink like parchment in consuming flame.

## 267

'O let it be enough what thou hast done;  
When spotted deaths ran armed through every street,  
With poisoned darts, which not the good could shun,  
The speedy could out-fly, or valiant meet.

## 268

'The living few, and frequent funerals then,  
Proclaimed thy wrath on this forsaken place;  
And now those few, who are returned again,  
Thy searching judgments to their dwellings trace.

## 269

'O pass not, Lord, an absolute decree,  
Or bind thy sentence unconditional;  
But in thy sentence our remorse foresee,  
And in that foresight this thy doom recal.

## 270

Thy threat'nings, Lord, as thine, thou may'st revoke:  
But, if immutable and fixed they stand,  
Continue still thyself to give the stroke,  
And let not foreign foes oppress thy land.'

## 271

The Eternal heard, and from the heavenly quire  
 Chose out the cherub with the flaming sword ;  
 And bade him swiftly drive the approaching fire  
 From where our naval magazines were stored.

## 272

The blessed minister his wings displayed,  
 And like a shooting star he cleft the night :  
 He charged the flames, and those that disobeyed  
 He lashed to duty with his sword of light.

## 273

The fugitive flames, chastised went forth to prey  
 On pious structures, by our fathers reared ;  
 By which to heaven they did affect the way,  
 Ere faith in churchmen without works was heard.

## 274

The wanting orphans saw, with watery eyes,  
 Their founders' charity in dust laid low ;  
 And sent to God their ever-answered cries ;  
 For he protects the poor, who made them so.

## 275

Nor could thy fabric, Paul's, defend thee long,  
 Though thou wert sacred to thy Maker's praise ;  
 Though made immortal by a poet's song,  
 And poets' songs the Theban walls could raise.

## 276

The daring flames peeped in, and saw from afar  
 The awful beauties of the sacred quire ;  
 But since it was profaned by civil war,  
 Heaven thought it fit to have it purged by fire.

## 277

Now down the narrow streets it swiftly came,  
 And, widely opening, did on both sides prey ;  
 This benefit we sadly owe the flame,  
 If only ruin must enlarge our way.

## 278

And now four days the sun had seen our woes ;  
 Four nights the moon beheld the incessant fire ;  
 It seemed as if the stars more sickly rose,  
 And farther from the feverish north retire.

## 279

In the empyrean heaven, the blessed abode,  
 The thrones and the dominions prostrate lie,  
 Not daring to behold their angry God ;  
 And a hushed silence damps the tuneful sky.

## 280

At length the Almighty cast a pitying eye,  
 And mercy softly touched his melting breast ;  
 He saw the town's one half in rubbish lie,  
 And eager flames drive on to storm the rest.

## 281

An hollow crystal pyramid he takes,  
 In firmamental waters dipt above ;  
 Of it a broad extinguisher he makes,  
 And hoods the flames that to their quarry drove.\*

## 282

The vanquished fires withdraw from every place,  
 Or, full with feeding, sink into a sleep :  
 Each household genius shows again his face,  
 And from the hearths the little Lares creep.

## 283

Our king this more than natural change beholds ;  
 With sober joy his heart and eyes abound :

\* Dryden is certainly not so successful in extinguishing the fire as in kindling it. ‘That monstrous verse,’ says Scott, ‘cannot be too often quoted, both to express the meanness of the image, and the confusion of the metaphor; for it will be noticed, that the extinguisher so unhappily conceived is not even employed in its own mean office. The flames of London are first a tallow candle; and secondly hawks, which, while pouncing on their quarry, are hooded with an extinguisher.’ Just before, a still more remarkable chaos of images is pressed into a single line, which informs us that

‘A hushed silence damps the tuneful sky.’

To the All-good his lifted hands he folds,  
And thanks him low on his redeemed ground.

284

As when sharp frosts had long constrained the earth,  
A kindly thaw unlocks it with cold rain;  
And first the tender blade peeps up to birth, [grain:  
And straight the green fields laugh with promised

285

By such degrees the spreading gladness grew  
In every heart which fear had froze before;  
The standing streets with so much joy they view,  
That with less grief the perished they deplore.

286

The father of the people opened wide  
His stores, and all the poor with plenty fed:  
Thus God's anointed God's own place supplied,  
And filled the empty with his daily bread.

287

This royal bounty brought its own reward,  
And in their minds so deep did print the sense,  
That if their ruins sadly they regard,  
'Tis but with fear the sight might drive him thence.

288

But so may he live long that town to sway,  
Which by his auspice they will nobler make,  
As he will hatch their ashes by his stay,  
And not their humble ruins now forsake.

289

They have not lost their loyalty by fire;  
Nor is their courage or their wealth so low,  
That from his wars they poorly would retire,  
Or beg the pity of a vanquished foe.

290

Not with more constancy the Jews of old,  
By Cyrus from rewarded exile sent,

Their royal city did in dust behold,  
Or with more vigour to rebuild it went.

## 291

The utmost malice of the stars is past,  
And two dire comets, which have scourged the town,  
In their own plague and fire have breathed the last,  
Or dimly in their sinking sockets frown.

## 292

Now frequent trines the happier lights among,  
And high-raised Jove, from his dark prison freed,  
Those weights took off that on his planet hung,  
Will gloriously the new-laid works succeed.

## 293

Methinks already from this chymic flame,  
I see a city of more precious mold ;  
Rich as the town which gives the Indies name,  
With silver paved, and all divine with gold.

## 294

Already labouring with a mighty fate,  
She shakes the rubbish from her mounting brow,  
And seems to have renewed her charter's date,  
Which Heaven will to the death of time allow.

## 295

More great than human now, and more august,\*  
Now deified she from her fires does rise :  
Her widening streets on new foundations trust,  
And opening into larger parts she flies.

## 296

Before, she like some shepherdess did show,  
Who sat to bathe her by a river's side ;  
Not answering to her fame, but rude and low,  
Nor taught the beauteous arts of modern pride.

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\* Alluding to the ancient Roman name of the city—Augusta—which went out under the Saxons.

## 297

Now, like a maiden queen, she will behold,  
 From her high turrets, hourly suitors come ;  
 The East with incense, and the West with gold,  
 Will stand like suppliants to receive her doom.

## 298

The silver Thames, her own domestic flood,  
 Shall bear her vessels like a sweeping train ;  
 And often wind, as of his mistress proud,  
 With longing eyes to meet her face again.

## 299

The wealthy Tagus, and the wealthier Rhine,  
 The glory of their towns no more shall boast ;  
 And Seye, that would with Belgian rivers join,  
 Shall find her lustre stained, and traffic lost.

## 300

The venturous merchant who designed more far,  
 And touches on our hospitable shore,  
 Charmed with the splendour of this northern star,  
 Shall here unlade him, and depart no more.

## 301

Our powerful navy shall no longer meet,  
 The wealth of France or Holland to invade ;  
 The beauty of this town, without a fleet,  
 From all the world shall vindicate her trade.

## 302

And while this famed emporium we prepare,  
 The British ocean shall such triumphs boast,  
 That those, who now disdain our trade to share,  
 Shall rob like pirates on our wealthy coast.

## 303

Already we have conquered half the war,  
 And the less dangerous part is left behind ;  
 Our trouble now is but to make them dare,  
 And not so great to vanquish as to find.

304

Thus to the Eastern wealth through storms we go,  
But now, the Cape once doubled, fear no more ;  
A constant trade-wind will securely blow,  
And gently lay us on the spicy shore.

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## TO MR. LEE, ON HIS ALEXANDER.

THE blast of common censure could I fear,  
Before your play my name should not appear ;  
For 'twill be thought, and with some colour too,  
I pay the bribe I first received from you ;  
That mutual vouchers for our fame we stand,  
And play the game into each other's hand ;  
And as cheap pen'orths to ourselves afford,  
As Bessus and the brothers of the sword.  
Such libels private men may well endure,  
When states and kings themselves are not secure ;  
For ill men, conscious of their inward guilt,  
Think the best actions on by-ends are built.  
And yet my silence had not 'scaped their spite ;  
Then, envy had not suffered me to write ;  
For, since I could not ignorance pretend,  
Such merit I must envy or commend.  
So many candidates there stand for wit,  
A place at court is scarce so hard to get :  
In vain they crowd each other at the door ;  
For e'en reversions are all begged before :  
Desert, how known soe'er, is long delayed ;  
And then too fools and knaves are better paid.  
Yet, as some actions bear so great a name,  
That courts themselves are just, for fear of shame ;  
So has the mighty merit of your play  
Extorted praise, and forced itself away.  
'Tis here as 'tis at sea ; who farthest goes,  
Or dares the most, makes all the rest his foes.

Yet when some virtue much outgrows the rest,  
It shoots too fast, and high, to be exprest ;  
As his heroic worth struck envy dumb,  
Who took the Dutchman, and who cut the boom.  
Such praise is yours, while you the passions move,  
That 'tis no longer feigned, 'tis real love,  
Where nature triumphs over wretched art ;  
We only warm the head, but you the heart.  
Always you warm ; and if the rising year,  
As in hot regions, brings the sun too near,  
'Tis but to make your fragrant spices blow,  
Which in our cooler climates will not grow.  
They only think you animate your theme  
With too much fire, who are themselves all phlegm.  
Prizes would be for lags of slowest pace,  
Were cripples made the judges of the race.  
Despise those drones, who praise, while they accuse.  
The too much vigour of your youthful muse.  
That humble style which they your virtue make,  
Is in your power ; you need but stoop and take.  
Your beauteous images must be allowed  
By all, but some vile poets of the crowd.  
But how should any sign-post dawber know  
The worth of Titian or of Angelo ?  
Hard features every bungler can command ;  
To draw true beauty shows a master's hand.

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### AN ESSAY UPON SATIRE.

[THIS piece appeared, without any author's name, somewhere about November, 1679. A copy fell into the hands of Rochester, who ascribed it at once to Dryden, apparently because it contained a panegyric on his patron, Lord Mulgrave, better known as Sheffield, Duke of Buckingham. Under this conviction, he revenged the attack it contained upon himself, by hiring some ruffians to cudgel Dryden, on his way home at

night, through Rose-alley. Hence the piece acquired the soubriquet of The Rose-alley Satire.

Malone thinks it was not written by Dryden, who ‘ might have made a few verbal alterations in it;’ but by Lord Mulgrave, who undoubtedly published it many years afterwards as his own.\* He finds his opinion upon the carelessness of the versification; and says that, if it had been written by Dryden, he would have given it the polish it received from the hands of Pope, ‘ by whom it appears to have been corrected and amended’ in the version published by Mulgrave.

The internal evidence is against this judgment. The poem has more pith in it than anything of Sheffield’s; who, as Pope said of him, was superficial in everything. The comparison with the *Essay on Poetry*, which Mr. Malone proposes as the test, is conclusive on this point. Sheffield’s verse is feeble and diluted, and has that sort of ‘ nobleman air’ by which, we are told, he was personally distinguished; while, in the satire, if it have not all the weight which Dryden could give to the lash, every stroke tells. The elegant languor of Sheffield is certainly not a characteristic of the *Essay on Satire*; and, if a few of the lines are flat or rugged, it is not the less probable that they were Dryden’s, especially as they do not appear to have been written for publication, and found their way into circulation originally in manuscript. That Dryden should have given his verses the ‘ polish’ of Pope, is a supposition which proceeds on a misconception of his genius. The last thing in the world Dryden would have been likely to have

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\* This opinion is supported (as far as the evidence is worth anything) by the following lines in Mulgrave’s *Essay on Poetry* (also published anonymously, in 1682), where he says of Dryden—

‘ Though praised and punished for another’s rhymes,  
His own deserve as much applause sometimes.’

There is so much mystification about the authorship of both these poems, that nothing which either of them contains in the way of personal reference is to be relied upon. If we are to accept Mulgrave’s authority, that he was the sole writer of the *Essay on Satire*, we must charge him with the incredible vanity of having written the passage which led Rochester to fix the authorship on Dryden; and, if so, why did he not exonerate Dryden from a responsibility which he was bound as a man of honour to take upon himself?

done to his verses, would have been to polish them in the manner of Pope. Nor is there any authority for assuming that Pope corrected and amended the version published by Sheffield. The only information we have on the subject goes the other way. It is true that Pope altered some lines in the *Essay on Poetry* (which had originally received a few corrections from Dryden); but Spence, who tells us this on Pope's own authority, also states, on the authority of Dean Lockier, that the alterations made in the *Essay on Satire* were made by Sheffield himself; that they were only verbal, and generally for the worse. In citing this statement, Malone makes the mistake of saying that Dean Lockier 'thought that Dryden had the *principal hand* in this piece; and that Sheffield only made a few verbal alterations.' But Lockier distinctly attributes the sole authorship to Dryden; and says that nothing could be more impudent than Sheffield's publishing it as his own. It is not so clear, however, that Sheffield *did* publish it as his own. The edition of his works containing it was not published till 1723, three years after his death, and twenty-three years after the death of Dryden. This edition, in two grand quarto volumes, was issued under the auspices of the Duchess of Buckingham, who seems to have been more interested in the splendour than the authenticity of the publication. Twenty years later, in 1743, appeared a Collection of Dryden's Poems, in which the *Essay on Satire* was included for the first time, and described as the joint production of 'Mr. Dryden and the Earl of Mulgrave.' This publication undoubtedly possesses no more authenticity than that which ascribes the poem exclusively to Mulgrave; but its ascription of the authorship has been adopted in all subsequent editions.

This is the whole of the external evidence; and although it is not very satisfactory either way, it seems favourable to the supposition, that Dryden, if not the sole author, had the chief hand in the Essay. It is right to add, that the internal evidence has divided the judgment of some competent critics. Upon that question I shall only venture to say, that, after the most careful consideration I could give to the poem, I have not considered myself justified in excluding it, either on the

ground of its being only partly Dryden's or wholly Mulgrave's; and I have retained it because there are passages in it which never could have been written by the latter, amongst which may be reasonably included the panegyric upon himself.]

HOW dull, and how insensible a beast  
Is man, who yet would lord it o'er the rest?  
Philosophers and poets vainly strove  
In every age the lumpish mass to move:  
But those were pedants, when compared with these,  
Who know not only to instruct but please.  
Poets alone found the delightful way,  
Mysterious morals gently to convey  
In charming numbers; so that as men grew  
Pleased with their poems, they grew wiser too.  
Satire has always shone among the rest,  
And is the boldest way, if not the best,  
To tell men freely of their foulest faults;  
To laugh at their vain deeds, and vainer thoughts.  
In satire too the wise took different ways,  
To each deserving its peculiar praise.  
Some did all folly with just sharpness blame,  
Whilst others laughed and scorned them into shame.  
But of these two, the last succeeded best,  
As men aim rightest when they shoot in jest.  
Yet, if we may presume to blame our guides,  
And censure those, who censure all besides;  
In other things they justly are preferred;  
In this alone methinks the ancients erred;  
Against the grossest follies they declaim;  
Hard they pursue, but hunt ignoble game.  
Nothing is easier than such blots to hit,  
And 'tis the talent of each vulgar wit:  
Besides, 'tis labour lost; for who would preach  
Morals to Armstrong,\* or dull Aston teach?

\* Sir Thomas Armstrong, a royalist, who had devoted himself so strenuously to the king's cause, that Cromwell threw him into prison. His zeal for Protestantism afterwards induced him to engage in the

'Tis being devout at play, wise at a ball,  
 Or bringing wit and friendship to Whitehall.  
 But with sharp eyes those nicer faults to find,  
 Which lie obscurely in the wisest mind ;  
 That little speck which all the rest does spoil,  
 To wash off that would be a noble toil ;  
 Beyond the loose writ libels of this age,  
 Or the forced scenes of our declining stage ;  
 Above all censure too, each little wit  
 Will be so glad to see the greater hit ;  
 Who judging better, though concerned the most,  
 Of such correction will have cause to boast.  
 In such a satire all would seek a share,  
 And every fool will fancy he is there.  
 Old story-tellers too must pine and die,  
 To see their antiquated wit laid by ;  
 Like her, who missed her name in a lampoon,  
 And grieved to find herself decayed so soon.  
 No common coxcomb must be mentioned here :  
 Not the dull train of dancing sparks appear ;  
 Nor fluttering officers who never fight ;  
 Of such a wretched rabble who would write ?  
 Much less half wits : that's more against our rules ;  
 For they are fops, the others are but fools.  
 Who would not be as silly as Dunbar ?  
 As dull as Monmouth, rather than Sir Carr ?<sup>\*</sup>  
 The cunning courtier should be slighted too,  
 Who with dull knavery makes so much ado ;  
 Till the shrewd fool, by thriving too too fast,  
 Like Æsop's fox becomes a prey at last.  
 Nor shall the royal mistresses be named,  
 Too ugly, or too easy to be blamed ;  
 With whom each rhyming fool keeps such a pother ;  
 They are as common that way as the other :

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service of Monmouth. After the discovery of the Rye-House Plot he fled to Holland, was seized, brought back, and executed. 'Dull Aston' was, probably, the loyalist of that name mentioned in the *Fasti*.

\* Sir Car Scrope, a court wit and poetaster. See *State Poems*.

Yet sauntering Charles between his beastly brace,  
 Meets with dissembling still in either place,  
 Affected humour, or a painted face.  
 In loyal libels we have often told him,  
 How one has jilted him, the other sold him :  
 How that affects to laugh, how this to weep ;  
 But who can rail so long as he can sleep ?  
 Was ever prince by two at once misled,  
 False, foolish, old, ill-natured, and ill-bred ?\*  
 Earnely and Ailesbury, with all that race  
 Of busy blockheads, shall have here no place ;  
 At council set as foils on Danby's score,†  
 To make that great false jewel shine the more ;  
 Who all that while was thought exceeding wise,  
 Only for taking pains and telling lies.  
 But there's no meddling with such nauseous men ;  
 Their very names have tired my lazy pen :  
 'Tis time to quit their company, and chuse  
 Some fitter subject for a sharper muse.

First, let's behold the merriest man alive !—  
 Against his careless genius vainly strive ;  
 Quit his dear ease, some deep design to lay,  
 'Gainst a set time, and then forget the day :  
 Yet he will laugh at his best friends, and be  
 Just as good company as Nokes and Lee.  
 But when he aims at reason or at rule,  
 He turns himself the best to ridicule.  
 Let him at business ne'er so earnest sit,  
 Show him but mirth, and bait that mirth with wit ;  
 That shadow of a jest shall be enjoyed,  
 Though he left all mankind to be destroyed.

\* These were the lines that exasperated the Duchess of Portsmouth so highly, that she is said to have stimulated Rochester, who was on close terms of intimacy with her, to the dastardly outrage on Dryden.

† Sir John Earnely, one of the lords of the treasury, the Earl of Ailesbury, and Danby, the lord-high-treasurer.

‡ The reader will probably find some difficulty in recognising in this portrait the character of Achitophel.

So cat transformed sat gravely and demure,  
 Till mouse appeared, and thought himself secure ;  
 But soon the lady had him in her eye,  
 And from her friend did just as oddly fly.  
 Reaching above our nature does no good ;  
 We must fall back to our old flesh and blood ;  
 As by our little Machiavel we find  
 That nimblest creature of the busy kind,  
 His limbs are crippled, and his body shakes ;  
 Yet his hard mind which all this bustle makes,  
 No pity of its poor companion takes.\*  
 What gravity can hold from laughing out,  
 To see him drag his feeble legs about,  
 Like hounds ill-coupled ? Jowler lugs him still  
 Through hedges, ditches, and through all that's ill.  
 'Twere crime in any man but him alone,  
 To use a body so, though 'tis one's own :  
 Yet this false comfort never gives him o'er,  
 That whilst he creeps his vigorous thoughts can soar :  
 Alas ! that soaring to those few that know,  
 Is but a busy grovelling here below.  
 So men in rapture think they mount the sky,  
 Whilst on the ground the entranced wretches lie :  
 So modern fops have fancied they could fly.  
 As the new earl with parts deserving praise,†  
 And wit enough to laugh at his own ways ;  
 Yet loses all soft days and sensual nights,  
 Kind nature checks, and kinder fortune slights ;

\* The close resemblance between these lines and a passage, also applied to Shaftesbury, in *Absalom and Achitophel*, is strongly in favour of the supposition that Dryden was the author of both:

'A fiery soul, which, working out its way,  
 Fretted his pigmy body to decay,  
 And o'er-informed its tenement of clay.'

† This sketch is said to have been intended for Lord Essex, who was committed to the Tower for being concerned in the Rye-House Plot, and was found there with his throat cut on the morning of Lord Russell's execution. He is called the 'new earl,' although that dignity was conferred on him eighteen years before.

Striving against his quiet all he can,  
 For the fine notion of a busy man.  
 And what is that at best, but one, whose mind  
 Is made to tire himself and all mankind?  
 For Ireland he would go; faith, let him reign;  
 For if some old fanatic lord would fain  
 Carry in trunks, and all my drudgery do,  
 I'll not only pay him, but admire him too.  
 But is there any other beast that lives,  
 Who his own harm so wittingly contrives?  
 Will any dog that has his teeth and stones,  
 Refinedly leave his bitches and his bones,  
 To turn a wheel? and bark to be employed,  
 While Venus is by rival dogs enjoyed?  
 Yet this fond man, to get a statesman's name,  
 Forfeits his friends, his freedom, and his fame.

Though satire nicely writ with humour stings  
 But those who merit praise in other things;  
 Yet we must needs this one exception make,  
 And break our rules for silly Tropos' sake;\*  
 Who was too much despised to be accused,  
 And therefore scarce deserves to be abused;  
 Raised only by his mercenary tongue,  
 For railing smoothly, and for reasoning wrong.  
 As boys on holy-days let loose to play,  
 Lay waggish traps for girls that pass that way;  
 Then shout to see in dirt and deep distress  
 Some silly cit in flowered foolish dress:  
 So have I mighty satisfaction found,  
 To see his tinsel reason on the ground:  
 To see the florid fool despised, and know it,  
 By some who scarce have words enough to show it:  
 For sense sits silent, and condemns for weaker  
 The finer, nay sometimes the wittiest speaker:

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\* By 'silly Tropos,' is meant Sir William Scroggs, who succeeded Sir Richard Rainsford as Lord Chief Justice of the King's Bench. He was violent and unscrupulous in his enmity against the Roman Catholics. Swift speaks of him with contemptuous severity in Drapier's letters

But 'tis prodigious so much eloquence  
Should be acquired by such little sense ;  
For words and wit did anciently agree,  
And Tully was no fool, though this man be :  
At bar abusive, on the bench unable,  
Knaver on the woolsack, fop at council table.  
These are the grievances of such fools as would  
Be rather wise than honest, great than good.

Some other kind of wits must be made known,  
Whose harmless errors hurt themselves alone ;  
Excess of luxury they think can please,  
And laziness call loving of their ease :  
To live dissolved in pleasure still they feign,  
Though their whole life's but intermitting pain :  
So much of surfeits, head-aches, claps are seen,  
We scarce perceive the little time between :  
Well-meaning men who make this gross mistake,  
And pleasure lose only for pleasure's sake ;  
Each pleasure has its price, and when we pay  
Too much of pain, we squander life away.

Thus Dorset, purring like a thoughtful cat,  
Married, but wiser puss ne'er thought of that ;  
And first he worried her with railing rhyme,  
Like Pembroke's mastives at his kindest time ;  
Then for one night sold all his slavish life,  
A teeming widow, but a barren wife ;  
Swelled by contact of such a fulsom toad,  
He lugged about the matrimonial load ;  
Till fortune, blindly kind as well as he,  
Has ill restored him to his liberty ;  
Which he would use in his old sneaking way,  
Drinking all night and dozing all the day ;  
Dull as Ned Howard, whom his brisker times\*  
Had famed for dullness in malicious rhimes.

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\* Edward Howard, a relative of the Berkshire family, and most unfavourably known in the history of English poetry, as the author of a lugubrious epic called *The British Princes*.

Mulgrave had much ado to 'scape the snare,  
Though learned in all those arts that cheat the fair:  
For after all his vulgar marriage-mocks,  
With beauty dazzled, Numps was in the stocks;  
Deluded parents dried their weeping eyes,  
To see him catch his tartar for his prize:  
The impatient town waited the wished-for change,  
And cuckolds smiled in hopes of sweet revenge;  
Till Petworth plot made us with sorrow see,  
As his estate, his person too was free:  
Him no soft thoughts, no gratitude could move;  
To gold he fled from beauty and from love;  
Yet failing there he keeps his freedom still,  
Forced to live happily against his will:  
'Tis not his fault, if too much wealth and power  
Break not his boasted quiet every hour.

And little Sid. for simile renowned,\*  
Pleasure has always sought but never found:  
Though all his thoughts on wine and women fall,  
His are so bad, sure he ne'er thinks at all.  
The flesh he lives upon is rank and strong,  
His meat and mistresses are kept too long.  
But sure we all mistake this pious man,  
Who mortifies his person all he can:  
What we uncharitably take for sin,  
Are only rules of this odd capuchin;  
For never hermit under grave pretence,  
Has lived more contrary to common sense;  
And 'tis a miracle we may suppose,  
No nastiness offends his skilful nose;  
Which from all stink can with peculiar art  
Extract perfume and essence from a f—t:  
Expecting supper is his great delight;  
He toils all day but to be drunk at night:

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\* The brother of Algernon Sidney,—supposed by some people to have been the real father of the Duke of Monmouth, who closely resembled him. See page 221.

Then o'er his cups this night-bird chirping sits,  
Till he takes Hewet and Jack Hall for wits.\*

Rochester I despise for want of wit,  
Though thought to have a tail and cloven feet ;  
For while he mischief means to all mankind,  
Himself alone the ill effects does find :  
And so like witches justly suffers shame,  
Whose harmless malice is so much the same.  
False are his words, affected is his wit ;  
So often he does aim, so seldom hit ;  
To every face he cringes while he speaks,  
But when the back is turned the head he breaks :  
Mean in each action, lewd in every limb,  
Manners themselves are mischievous in him :  
A proof that chance alone makes every creature,  
A very Killigrew without good nature.†  
For what a Bessus has he always lived,‡  
And his own kickings notably contrived ?  
For, there's the folly that's still mixed with fear,  
Cowards more blows than any hero bear ;  
Of fighting sparks some may their pleasures say,  
But 'tis a bolder thing to run away :  
The world may well forgive him all his ill,  
For every fault does prove his penance still :  
Falsely he falls into some dangerous noose,  
And then as meanly labours to get loose ;  
A life so infamous is better quitting,  
Spent in base injury and low submitting.  
I'd like to have left out his poetry ;  
Forgot by all almost as well as me.  
Sometimes he has some humour, never wit,  
And if it rarely, very rarely, hit,

\* Beau Hewitt, the original of Etherege's *Sir Fopling Flutter*. Jack Hall was one of the court fops and idlers.

† Thomas Killigrew, who carried off his impudent wit so pleasantly, that he could say what he liked to the king.

‡ Bessus, in Beaumont and Fletcher's *King and No King*.

'Tis under so much nasty rubbish laid,  
 To find it out's the cinderwoman's trade ;  
 Who for the wretched remnants of a fire,  
 Must toil all day in ashes and in mire.  
 So lewdly dull his idle works appear,  
 The wretched texts deserve no comments here ;  
 Where one poor thought sometimes left all alone,  
 For a whole page of dullness must atone.

How vain a thing is man, and how unwise !  
 E'en he, who would himself the most despise !  
 I, who so wise and humble seem to be,  
 Now my own vanity and pride can't see.  
 While the world's nonsense is so sharply shown,  
 We pull down others, but to raise our own ;  
 That we may angels seem, we paint them elves,  
 And are but satires to set up ourselves.  
 I, who have all this while been finding fault,  
 E'en with my master, who first satire taught ;  
 And did by that describe the task so hard,  
 It seems stupendous and above reward ;  
 Now labour with unequal force to climb  
 That lofty hill, unreached by former time :  
 'Tis just that I should to the bottom fall,  
 Learn to write well, or not to write at all.

### TO THE EARL OF ROSCOMMON,

ON HIS EXCELLENT ESSAY ON TRANSLATED VERSE. 1680.

**W**HETHER the fruitful Nile, or Tyrian shore,  
 The seeds of arts and infant science bore,  
 'Tis sure the noble plant, translated first,  
 Advanced its head in Grecian gardens nurst.  
 The Grecians added verse ; their tuneful tongue  
 Made nature first, and nature's God their song.  
 Nor stopt translation here : for conquering Rome,  
 With Grecian spoils, brought Grecian numbers home ;

Enriched by those Athenian muses more,  
 Than all the vanquished world could yield before.  
 'Till barbarous nations, and more barb'rous times,  
 Debased the majesty of verse to rhymes ;  
 Those rude at first ; a kind of hobbling prose,  
 That limped along, and tinkled in the close.\*  
 But Italy, reviving from the trance  
 Of Vandal, Goth, and Monkish ignorance,  
 With pauses, cadence, and well-vowelled words,  
 And all the graces a good ear affords,  
 Made rhyme an art, and Dante's polished page  
 Restored a silver, not a golden age.  
 Then Petrarch followed, and in him we see,  
 What rhyme improved in all its height can be ;  
 At best a pleasing sound, and fair barbarity.  
 The French pursued their steps ; and Britain, last,  
 In manly sweetness all the rest surpassed.  
 The wit of Greece, the gravity of Rome,  
 Appear exalted in the British loom :  
 The Muses' empire is restored again,  
 In Charles's reign, and by Roscommon's pen.  
 Yet modestly he does his work survey,  
 And calls a finished Poem an Essay ;  
 For all the needful rules are scattered here ;  
 Truth smoothly told, and pleasantly severe ;  
 So well is art disguised, for nature to appear.  
 Nor need those rules to give translation light ;  
 His own example is a flame so bright ;  
 That he, who but arrives to copy well,  
 Unguided will advance, unknowing will excel.  
 Scarce his own Horace could such rules ordain,  
 Or his own Virgil sing a nobler strain.

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\* Dryden adopts this contemptuous description of rhyme from preceding authors, and those of no mean note. Thus in Ben Jonson's Masque of *The Fortunate Isles*, Skogan, the jester, is represented as a writer 'in rime, fine *tinkling* rime !' And Andrew Marvell, in his spirited verses to Milton, on his *Paradise Lost*, thus exclaims :

' Well mightst thou scorn thy readers to allure  
 With *tinkling* rhyme, of thy own sense secure.'—TODD.

How much in him may rising Ireland boast,  
How much in gaining him has Britain lost!  
Their island in revenge has ours reclaimed;  
The more instructed we, the more we still are shamed.  
'Tis well for us his generous blood did flow,  
Derived from British channels long ago,  
That here his conquering ancestors were nurst,  
And Ireland but translated England first:  
By this reprisal we regain our right,  
Else must the two contending nations fight;  
A nobler quarrel for his native earth,  
Than what divided Greece for Homer's birth.  
To what perfection will our tongue arrive,  
How will invention and translation thrive,  
When authors nobly born will bear their part,  
And not disdain the inglorious praise of art!  
Great generals thus, descending from command,  
With their own toil provoke the soldier's hand.  
How will sweet Ovid's ghost be pleased to hear  
His fame augmented by an English peer;  
How he embellishes his Helen's loves,  
Outdoes his softness, and his sense improves!  
When these translate, and teach translators too,  
Nor firstling kid, nor any vulgar vow,  
Should at Apollo's grateful altar stand:  
Roscommon writes; to that auspicious hand,  
Muse, feed the bull that spurns the yellow sand.  
Roscommon, whom both court and camps commend,  
True to his prince, and faithful to his friend;  
Roscommon first in fields of honour known,  
First in the peaceful triumphs of the gown;  
Who both Minervas justly makes his own.  
Now let the few beloved by Jove, and they  
Whom infused Titan formed of better clay,  
On equal terms with ancient wit engage,  
Nor mighty Homer fear, nor sacred Virgil's page;  
Our English palace opens wide in state,  
And without stooping they may pass the gate.

## ABSALOM AND ACHITOPHEL.

## PART THE FIRST.

[THIS famous satire is founded on the intrigues of the Duke of Monmouth and Lord Shaftesbury, to exclude the Duke of York from the throne; a design which ended in rebellion, and brought Monmouth to the scaffold. The historical episode is so well known, that it is unnecessary to encumber these notes with any further details concerning it than are absolutely necessary to illustrate the purpose of the poem.

The Duke of Monmouth appeared at court soon after the Restoration.\* He was the son of Charles II. by that unfortunate Lucy Waters, who had been cast upon the world by her royal lover, and perished miserably in Paris. Bearing a striking resemblance to Colonel Sidney, the brother of Algernon Sidney, with whom Lucy Waters had lived before she became the king's mistress, it was suspected by many that Sidney was his real father: this circumstance, however, instead of operating to his disadvantage at court, only increased the infatuation of that excessive affection with which the king regarded him.† Monmouth was very hand-

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\* Sir James Mackintosh [*History of England*, vol. vii. p. 77] places the appearance of Monmouth at Whitehall in 1668. This is a mistake. The king sent for him almost immediately after the Restoration.

† The numerous distinctions heaped by the king on his favourite son afford the best evidence of the affection in which he held him. Monmouth, independently of his peerage and estates, enjoyed many offices of influence and emolument; was lord chamberlain of Scotland, lord general of all the land forces, chancellor of Oxford, master of the horse, knight of the garter, governor of Kingston-upon-Hull, &c. So far back as 1662-3, Pepys speaks of the magnificent figure he made at court; and even at that early period expresses an apprehension that the king's love for him might lead to the recognition of his legitimacy. 'The Duke of Monmouth is in so great splendour at court, and so dandled by the king, that some doubt that if the king should have no child by the queen, which there is yet no appearance of, whether he would not be acknowledged as a lawful son; and that there will be a difference follow between the Duke of York and him, which God prevent!'—*Diary*, ii. p. 90. Pepys always calls him 'the little Duke,' and records many instances of his majesty's partiality for him. Thus

some, and had a reputation for gallantry in camp and saloon ; but, being vain, weak, and ambitious, he easily fell into the snares that were laid for him. The undisguised popery of the Duke of York afforded the opportunity for making an effective use of Monmouth's name and popularity. Shaftesbury headed the Protestant party, and was the principal mover of the bill of exclusion, by which the king's brother, on the ground of his religion, was to be incapacitated from the succession ; and the crown, upon the demise of the sovereign, was to pass to the next heir, being a Protestant, as if the duke were dead. The king, however, had no children by her majesty, Queen Catherine, and it was necessary to supply him with an heir from some other source. For that purpose, an old story, which had long lain dormant, of the king's marriage with Lucy Waters (evidence of which was said to be preserved in some mysterious black box, which never came to light), was revived, with plausible circumstantial details, and industriously circulated. The king publicly declared that no such marriage had ever taken place ; but the Protestant party, carrying with them the enthusiastic support of the people, were not to be diverted from their object ; and the bill of exclusion was read a second time in the commons on the 21st May, 1679, by a majority of 207 to 121, and would have passed into law, had not his majesty averted that

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we learn, that the 'little Duke of Monmouth is ordered to take place of all dukes, and so do follow Prince Rupert now, before the Duke of Buckingham or any one else.' Again, at Windsor, the duke is dancing with the queen, with his hat in his hand, when 'the king came in and kissed him, and made him put on his hat, which everybody took notice of.' On another occasion (1663), Lord Sandwich has a conversation with Pepys, which 'though he did not flatly tell him any such thing,' led him to 'suspect that all is not kind between the king and the duke [of York] ; and that the king's fondness to the little duke do occasion it. And it may be, that there is some feare of his being made heire to the crown.' Another person communicates more freely to him the fear that the king 'will be tempted to endeavour to set the crown upon the little duke.' It is evident that the king himself abundantly encouraged the notion, by treating Monmouth as a legitimate member of the royal family ; as on the occasion of the mourning for the Duchess of Savoy, when none but the King, the Duke of York, Prince Rupert, and Monmouth were in deep mourning, that is, long cloaks. 'So that,'

result by a sudden and arbitrary dissolution of parliament. The dismissal of Monmouth from his office of commander-in-chief still farther marked the king's resolution not to yield up the right of succession. The next parliament revenged themselves for the loss of the exclusion bill, by stopping the supplies, and by successive resolutions declaring that the bill was indispensable to the security of Protestantism, that no money should be voted till it became law, and that all persons advising a dissolution should fall under the censure of the house. Several intermediate expedients were proposed; amongst the rest, that the Prince of Orange should be united in the government with the Duke of York on the demise of the crown; but every attempt at compromise was indignantly rejected by the commons. It was on this occasion that Colonel Titus made use of the observation, that 'to trust expedients with such a king on the throne, would be just as wise as, if there were a lion in the lobby, and we should vote to let him in, and chain him, instead of fastening the door to keep him out;—an observation better known by the familiar lines:

‘I hear a lion in the lobby roar:  
Say, Mr. Speaker, shall we shut the door,  
And keep him out?—or, shall we let him in,  
To try if we can turn him out again?’

In this extremity, the lion once more availed himself of his prerogative, and dissolved the parliament. The excitement

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says Pepys, ‘he mourns as a prince of the blood, while the Duke of York do no more, and all the nobles of the land not so much; which gives great offence.’ Under all these circumstances, it was not very surprising to find Monmouth publicly declaring ‘that he would be the death of any man that says the king was not married to his mother.’ The king appears to have indulged him to such a height in this claim, as to have in some degree justified him in asserting it. Thus, for instance, on the occasion of his marriage, he suffered him to have the royal arms of England, Scotland, and France, quartered on some other fields, on his coach. Pepys bears witness to the fact; and adds, ‘but what it is that speaks his being a bastard, I know not.’ This arrogant assumption of royalty was authenticated in the books of heraldry in the council-chamber at Whitehall, wherein his title was described as ‘The most noble and high-born prince, James Scott, Duke of Monmouth,’ &c. The phrase ‘high-born’ jangles terribly out of tune with the tragical fate of Lucy Waters!

produced by this bold proceeding threw the country into a ferment, and little less than a civil war was looked for. The struggle on the hustings was like a contest of life or death. The elections ran strongly against the court; and the king, apprehensive of violence, from the temper of the people in London and Westminster, summoned the new parliament to meet him in Oxford. All attempts to dissuade him from this dangerous resolution were idle. A petition from sixteen peers, headed by Monmouth, and a ghostly warning from the apparition of Lucy Waters, who was said to have appeared in white, with a veil over her face, to one Elizabeth Freeman, the ‘maid of Hatfield,’ were urged upon him to no effect. The obstinacy of his blood resisted all appeals; although the hazard was so eminent, that he felt it necessary to surround his person by a body of cavalry when he went to meet the commons, who, on their side, in like manner, came attended by their armed retainers. At this alarming juncture, Shaftesbury privately submitted a plan for conciliating parliament. It was that which he had all along contemplated—a proposal for settling the succession on the Duke of Monmouth. The king rejected it, as a violation of his conscience and the laws. There was nothing, therefore, left, but to return to the bill of exclusion. It was accordingly brought in, with fresh incidents of irritation; and read a first time on the 28th of March, 1681. This stage of the business was scarcely accomplished, when the usher of the black rod appeared, and summoned the commons to attend his majesty in the house of peers. The sequel was instantly foreseen, and the commons, in an access of panic, yielded to their fate. The king had made all his arrangements secretly for this final *coup d'état*, conveying the robes of state, according to Burnet's account, to the place of meeting in a sedan chair, with the crown concealed between his feet. The moment the commons approached, his majesty abruptly informed them, that perceiving there were heats between the two houses, he thought fit to dissolve them. And they were dissolved accordingly. This was the last parliament that met under his reign.

The next step was to prosecute all persons who could be proved to have taken an active part in the agitation against Popery and the Duke of York. No means were left untried to criminate Shaftesbury, through the evidence of his adherents and followers. At last the Irish witnesses, as they were called, whom Shaftesbury had taken under his protection, were corrupted, and bribed, and induced to turn against him. Upon their statements he was accused of subornation and treason, and committed for the second time to the Tower. This was on the 2nd July, 1681. During the interval that elapsed between his commitment and the presentation of the bill of indictment, the utmost ingenuity was employed to prejudice the public mind against him. It was in this interval, and for this purpose, *Absalom and Achitophel* was written and published. The poem is supposed to have been undertaken at the instance of the king himself; a supposition in some degree sustained by the forbearance shown in the poem towards Monmouth, over whose errors the king hesitated with lingering tenderness, and by the fact of its having been published a few days before the presentation of the bill of indictment, with the evident design of inflaming the passions of the people. The effect it produced was unprecedented; but it failed of its immediate object. The grand jury ignored the bill against Shaftesbury; and the result was received with shouts of triumph by the populace.

The first part of the satire was published anonymously on the 17th November, 1681; a second edition was called for before the close of December, and three more in the ensuing year. Dr. Johnson's father, who was a bookseller, told him that its success had no parallel in his recollection, except that of Sacheverel's *Sermon*. Entire lines from it passed into household words; the characters assigned to the persons introduced, clung to them for the rest of their lives; the same scriptural titles were employed by hosts of poetasters and pamphleteers; and even the clergy volunteered to give increased notoriety to their application, by bringing them into their discourses from the pulpit. Dryden

made some additions to the poem in subsequent editions; in all cases with a view to soften the original severity. It has been stated that he was induced to temper his character of Shaftesbury by a favour he received at the hands of that nobleman; but Mr. Malone has shown, by an examination of dates, that the statement was unfounded. At the time when the alleged favour must have been bestowed, Shaftesbury was dead.

The application of a scriptural parallel to contemporary politics did not originate with Dryden. Scott refers to a prose tract of two pages which appeared a year before on the same subject, and with very nearly the same title. In a Letter to the Duke of Monmouth, also, a similar use had been made of the story of David and Absalom. It is the province of genius to appropriate such suggestions, and inspire them with vitality; and Dryden's originality in the employment of the idea is no more to be impeached because others had used it first, than that of Shakespeare, when he created the comedy of *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* out of an old Spanish romance.

It has been well said of this poem that it is the most excellent of its kind in our language; that it combines all those qualities which are essential to the perfection of a satire of the highest and most dignified order. The portraits, while they possess the breadth and boldness of full lengths, are finished with the care of miniatures. Dryden seems to have bestowed unusual pains upon the details. The greatness and responsibility of the design influenced him, no doubt, in the desire to render its execution as powerful and effective as he could. The subject presented great difficulties. All the characters to be drawn were living and conspicuous men; the action, if it can be said to have any, was still going forward, and so exposed to vicissitudes, that even while the poem was passing through the press, its predictions were liable to be reversed, and its arguments falsified; there was also the disadvantage of writing on the unpopular side, and of being obliged to hold up to public reprobation the conduct of a public favourite, who was at the same time, from personal motives, to be treated

with leniency and forbearance. It is superfluous to criticise the skill with which these difficulties are mastered. Hitherto Dryden had been gradually liberating himself from the false taste of the day (except in his dramas, for which he might plead some slender excuses); here he casts it off altogether. He deals with real life in the language of reality: his masculine thoughts find a direct and appropriate expression; he reasons through a poetical medium which is never clouded by fanciful conceits; his versification is flowing, accurate, and sonorous; and his diction is at once chaste and trenchant. But in no particulars is the poem more worthy of admiration, than in the dispassionate elevation of the satire, and the art which is disclosed in the portraiture of Monmouth. The severity is everywhere tempered with a recognition of whatever was meritorious or deprecatory in its object. Even Shaftesbury is spared by the justice of his opponent. ‘I have but laughed,’ says Dryden in his preface, ‘at some men’s follies, when I could have declaimed against their vices; and other men’s virtues I have commended as freely as I have taxed their crimes.’ With respect to Monmouth, there were controlling reasons for administering correction to him in a kind and tolerant spirit; the king loved him in the midst of his errors, and desired to reclaim rather than to punish him; and the poet was under obligations to him. Dryden did not hesitate to avow frankly the spirit in which he dealt with Monmouth. ‘They are not the violent,’ he observes, ‘whom I desire to please. The fault on the right hand is to extenuate, palliate, and indulge; and, to confess freely, I have endeavoured to commit it. Besides the respect which I owe his birth [considering the source from whence Monmouth sprang, this tribute is a little awkward], I have a greater for his heroic virtues; and David himself could not be more tender of the young man’s life, than I would be of his reputation.’ The delicacy with which this tenderness is made to qualify the censure without weakening it, and the exquisite art with which reproof is mixed with panegyric, cannot escape the attention of the reader. Such was the paramount aim and chief per-

plexity of the undertaking; and its successful achievement may be regarded as one of Dryden's greatest triumphs.

Perhaps the strongest objection that can be urged against the poem is the choice of the allegory; not for the reason assigned by Dr. Johnson, that 'allegories drawn to great length will always break,' which scarcely applies in this instance; but because the allegory, with a single exception, which it would have been indiscreet to have rendered prominent, was not happily selected. With us, looking back upon the life and character of Charles II., at this distance of time, the notion of representing him in the likeness of King David, a man after God's own heart—has a very ludicrous effect; but Dryden understood his own times better than we do, and the best answer to the objection is to be found in the impression made on the public mind by this scriptural masquerade. The characters hit home; the names passed glibly into the ballads, lampoons, and political tracts of the day; and Charles and David remained convertible terms to the end of the reign.

The sense of disappointment expressed by Dr. Johnson at the abrupt termination of the poem, if it have any foundation in critical truth, must be referred, not to the failure of the poet, but to the inevitable conditions of his subject. The comparison with an enchanted castle, which vanishes into air, when the destined knight blows his trumpet before it, is purely gratuitous. The poem presents no materials corresponding to a 'wide moat and lofty battlements, walls of marble and gates of brass.' It is a mere tableau, without incidents. It raises no expectations which the issue does not sufficiently fulfil. When the knight blows his horn we have a right to suppose ourselves on the threshold of fresh adventures; but when the king disperses the parliament at Oxford, the interest, if not terminated, is at once broken up. It is true that in all works of art the mind craves a result, a completion, a finality of some satisfactory sort; but '*Absalom and Achitophel*' is not a romance, and we have no right to exact from it the fulfilment of laws of which it is entirely independent.

If we were justified in looking to its termination for a perfect dramatic solution, we should also, for the sake of consistency, demand other dramatic features which are not in the poem, and which it would be absurd to expect to find there. Upon the whole, it may be allowed that it was well adapted to the purpose it was intended to serve, and to the moment at which it appeared. The end had not yet come—the elements were in disturbance—and the satire depicts the surrounding chaos, and dismisses it at an ominous juncture. Dryden himself forestalled any objection that might be made to the suddenness of the close. ‘The conclusion of the story,’ he observes, in his address to the reader, ‘I purposely forbore to prosecute, because I could not obtain from myself to show Absalom unfortunate. The frame of it was cut out for a picture to the waist; and if the draft be so far true, it is as much as I designed.’

To spare the reader the trouble of frequent recurrence to the notes, the characters in the poem, with the names of the persons they are designed to represent, are here grouped into a single view.

David.....	Charles II. —
Michal .....	Queen Catherine. —
Pharaoh.....	King of France. —
Saul .....	Cromwell. —
Ishbosheth.....	Richard Cromwell.
Absalom.....	Duke of Monmouth. —
Annabel.....	Duchess of Monmouth.
Bathsheba .....	Duchess of Portsmouth.
Achitophel.....	Earl of Shaftesbury. —
Zimri .....	Duke of Buckingham. —
Barzillai.....	Duke of Ormond.
Balaam .....	Earl of Huntingdon.
Adriel .....	Earl of Mulgrave. —
Caleb .....	Lord Grey of Wark.
Nadab .....	Lord Howard of Esrick.
Zadoc .....	Sancroft, Archbishop of Canterbury.
Sagan.....	Compton, Bishop of Londen.

Jotham .....	Sir George Saville, afterwards Marquis of Halifax.
Hushai .....	Laurence Hyde, second son of Lord Clarendon, afterwards Earl of Rochester.
Jonas .....	Sir William Jones.
Agag .....	Sir Edmondbury Godfrey.
Amiel .....	Sir Edward Seymour, Speaker of the House of Commons.
Issachar .....	Mr. Thomas Thynne.
Shimei .....	Mr. Slingsby Bethel, one of the Sheriffs of London.
Corah .....	Titus Oates.
<i>Places</i> .....	Hebron and Tyre, indifferently used to designate Holland—Egypt, France—Jerusalem, London.
<i>Sects</i> .....	Jebusites, the Roman Catholics — Levites, the dissenting clergy, expelled by the Act of Conformity.]

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## TO THE READER.

IT is not my intention to make an apology for my poem: some will think it needs no excuse, and others will receive none. The design I am sure is honest; but he who draws his pen for one party must expect to make enemies of the other. For wit and fool are consequents of Whig and Tory; and every man is a knave or an ass to the contrary side. There is a treasury of merits in the Fanatic church, as well as in the Popish, and a pennyworth to be had of saintship, honesty, and poetry, for the lewd, the factious, and the blockheads; but the longest chapter in Deuteronomy has not curses enough for an Anti-Birmingham. My comfort is, their manifest prejudice to my cause will render their judgment of less authority against me. Yet if a poem have genius, it will force its own reception in the world; for there is a sweetness in good verse, which tickles even while it hurts; and no man can be heartily angry with him who pleases him against his will. The commendation of adversaries is the greatest triumph of a writer, because it never comes unless extorted. But I can be satisfied on more easy terms: if I happen to please the

more moderate sort, I shall be sure of an honest party, and, in all probability, of the best judges; for the least concerned are commonly the least corrupt. And I confess I have laid in for those by rebating the satire, where justice would allow it, from carrying too sharp an edge. They who can criticise so weakly as to imagine I have done my worst, may be convinced at their own cost that I can write severely, with more ease than I can gently. I have but laughed at some men's follies, when I could have declaimed against their vices; and other men's virtues I have commended, as freely as I have taxed their crimes. And now, if you are a malicious reader, I expect you should return upon me that I affect to be thought more impartial than I am; but if men are not to be judged by their professions, God forgive you commonwealth's-men for professing so plausibly for the government. You cannot be so unconscionable as to charge me for not subscribing my name; for that would reflect too grossly upon your own party, who never dare, though they have the advantage of a jury to secure them. If you like not my poem, the fault may possibly be in my writing, though it is hard for an author to judge against himself; but more probably it is in your morals, which cannot bear the truth of it. The violent on both sides will condemn the character of Absalom, as either too favourably or too hardly drawn; but they are not the violent whom I desire to please. The fault on the right hand is to extenuate, palliate, and indulge; and, to confess freely, I have endeavoured to commit it. Besides the respect which I owe his birth, I have a greater for his heroic virtues; and David himself could not be more tender of the young man's life, than I would be of his reputation. But since the most excellent natures are always the most easy, and, as being such, are the soonest perverted by ill counsels, especially when baited with fame and glory, it is no more a wonder that he withheld not the temptations of Achitophel than it was for Adam not to have resisted the two devils, the serpent and the woman. The conclusion of the story I purposely forbore to prosecute, because I could not obtain from myself to show Absalom unfortunate. The frame of it was cut out but for a picture to the waist; and if the draught be so far true, it is as much as I designed.

Were I the inventor, who am only the historian, I should certainly conclude the piece with the reconciliation of Absalom to David. And who knows but this may come to pass? Things were not brought to an extremity where I left the story: there seems yet to be room left for a composure; hereafter there may

be only for pity. I have not so much as an uncharitable wish against Achitophel, but am content to be accused of a good-natured error, and to hope with Origen, that the devil himself may at last be saved. For which reason, in this poem, he is neither brought to set his house in order, nor to dispose of his person afterwards as he in wisdom shall think fit. God is infinitely merciful; and his vicegerent is only not so, because he is not infinite.

The true end of satire is the amendment of vices by correction. And he, who writes honestly, is no more an enemy to the offender, than the physician to the patient, when he prescribes harsh remedies to an inveterate disease; for those are only in order to prevent the chirurgeon's work of an *Ense recidendum*, which I wish not to my very enemies. To conclude all; if the body politic have any analogy to the natural, in my weak judgment, an act of oblivion were as necessary in a hot distempered state, as an opiate would be in a raging fever.

## ABSALOM AND ACHITOPHEL.

## PART THE FIRST.

—Si proprius stes  
Te capiet magis—

IN pious times, ere priestcraft did begin,  
Before polygamy was made a sin;  
When man on many multiplied his kind,  
Ere one to one was cursedly confined;  
When nature prompted, and no law denied  
Promiscuous use of concubine and bride;\*  
Then Israel's monarch after Heaven's own heart,  
His vigorous warmth did variously impart  
To wives and slaves; and, wide as his command,  
Scattered his Maker's image through the land.

\* A charge of writing irreverently about marriage was brought against Dryden, founded, partly, upon this passage, in which he is expressing no opinion of his own, but merely describing the state of society in Jerusalem under Saul. In his Epistle to his cousin, Mr. Driden, of Chesterton, he is more explicit on this dangerous topic, expressly commanding that gentleman for avoiding the hazards of

Michal, of royal blood, the crown did wear;  
 A soil ungrateful to the tiller's care:  
 Not so the rest; for several mothers bore  
 To god-like David several sons before.  
 But since like slaves his bed they did ascend,  
 No true succession could their seed attend.  
 Of all the numerous progeny was none  
 So beautiful, so brave, as Absalon :\*  
 Whether, inspired by some diviner lust,  
 His father got him with a greater gust:  
 Or that his conscious destiny made way,  
 By manly beauty, to imperial sway.  
 Early in foreign fields he won renown,  
 With kings and states allied to Israel's crown;  
 In peace the thoughts of war he could remove,  
 And seemed as he were only born for love.  
 Whate'er he did, was done with so much ease,  
 In him alone 'twas natural to please;  
 His motions all accompanied with grace,  
 And Paradise was opened in his face.†

wedlock, which he represents as having worked nothing but evil from the beginning:

‘ Minds are so hardly matched, that even the first,  
 Though paired by Heaven, in Paradise were curst.’

He is careful, however, to mend his logic, by afterwards declaring that he does not mean to ‘ blemish all the fair,’ but merely to assert that—

‘ ’tis wisdom to beware,  
 And better shun the bait, than struggle in the snare.’

After all it amounts to nothing more than a little prudent counsel on the choice of a wife, rather ascetically expressed. Dryden may be forgiven for his want of faith on this subject. His own marriage was not a happy one. It was embittered by the unfortunate temper of his wife—the germ of that fatal malady which darkened the closing years of her life.

\* This rhyme occurs twice. Wherever the name appears in the body of the poem, it is spelt, as in the title, Absalom.

† The Duke of Monmouth, although small of stature, was remarkable for the beauty of his person and features. He and the Duchess used to take prominent parts in the masquerades at court, and once played at Whitehall, in Dryden's *Indian Emperor*, a sequel to the *Indian Queen* of Howard, to which Dryden had contributed. The Duchess displayed some skill, but the Duke appears to have been an indifferent actor:

With secret joy indulgent David viewed  
 His youthful image in his son renewed :  
 To all his wishes nothing he denied ;  
 And made the charming Annabel his bride.\*  
 What faults he had,—for who from faults is free ?  
 His father could not, or he would not see.  
 Some warm excesses, which the law forbore,  
 Were construed youth that purged by boiling o'er ;  
 And Amnon's murder by a specious name,  
 Was called a just revenge for injured fame.†  
 Thus praised and loved, the noble youth remained,  
 While David undisturbed in Sion reigned.  
 But life can never be sincerely blest ;  
 Heaven punishes the bad, and proves the best.  
 The Jews, a headstrong, moody, murmuring race,  
 As ever tried the extent and stretch of grace ;

from Pepys' account of him, his animal spirits were probably too rampant for the restraints of tragedy. 'The Duke of Monmouth is the most skittish, leaping gallant that ever I saw, always in action, vaulting, or leaping, or clambering.'—*Diary*, iii. 55.

\* This lady was Anne Scott, Countess of Buccleugh in her own right, having succeeded to the title and estate on the death of her eldest sister, by which accession to her property she became the richest heiress in Europe. 'Her person,' says De Grammont, 'was full of charms, and her mind possessed all those perfections in which her husband was deficient.' The deficiencies of Monmouth's character are briefly described by Macpherson: 'he was ambitious without dignity, busy without consequence, attempting ever to be artful, but always a fool.'—*Hist. Eng.* The Duke after his marriage took his wife's name, having no legitimate name of his own to confer upon her. Notwithstanding the hostile pretensions set up by Monmouth, she preserved a close intimacy with the Duke of York, which, Buckingham insinuates, awakened the jealousy of her husband. But the scandal was utterly groundless, and Monmouth had little reason to complain had it been true. He devoted himself openly to Lady Harriet Wentworth, and declared with his last breath, that he considered her his only wife in the sight of God. The Duchess bore his desertion of her with exemplary patience, and acted towards him with kindness, although he had entirely forfeited her love and respect. She married again after Monmouth's execution, and retained her beauty to the last; but she unfortunately strained her leg in dancing, and contracted a lameness in consequence, from which she never entirely recovered.

† Sir Walter Scott thinks that this passage refers to the assault on Sir John Coventry, whose nose was slit by some of Monmouth's troops. But Dryden would scarcely have described that affray as a 'murder';

God's pampered people, whom, debauched with ease,  
No king could govern, nor no God could please ;  
Gods they had tried of every shape and size,  
That goldsmiths could produce, or priests devise ;  
These Adam-wits, too fortunately free,  
Began to dream they wanted liberty ;  
And when no rule, no precedent was found,  
Of men, by laws less circumscribed and bound ;  
They led their wild desires to woods and caves,  
And thought that all but savages were slaves.  
They who, when Saul was dead, without a blow,  
Made foolish Ishbosheth the crown forego ;  
Who banished David did from Hebron bring,  
And with a general shout proclaimed him king ;  
Those very Jews, who at their very best,  
Their humour more than loyalty exprest,  
Now wondered why so long they had obeyed  
An idol monarch, which their hands had made ;  
Thought they might ruin him they could create,  
Or melt him to that golden calf—a state.  
But these were random bolts ; no formed design,  
Nor interest made the factious crowd to join :  
The sober part of Israel, free from stain,  
Well knew the value of a peaceful reign ;  
And looking backward with a wise affright,  
Saw seams of wounds dishonest to the sight :  
In contemplation of whose ugly scars,  
They curst the memory of civil wars.  
The moderate sort of men, thus qualified,  
Inclined the balance to the better side ;  
And David's mildness managed it so well,  
The bad found no occasion to rebel.

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besides, there is no evidence to connect Monmouth with it. The greater probability is, that the allusion is to one of those acts of drunken violence common in these days, which the Duke's influence may have hushed up. The roll of assassinations, under the reign of Charles II., would furnish materials for heavy bills of indictment against some of the most prominent men of the time.

But when to sin our biased nature leans,  
The careful devil is still at hand with means ;  
And providently pimps for ill desires :  
The good old cause, revived, a plot requires.  
Plots, true or false, are necessary things,  
To raise up commonwealths, and ruin kings.

The inhabitants of old Jerusalem  
Were Jebusites ; the town so called from them ;  
And theirs the native right——  
But when the chosen people grew more strong,  
The rightful cause at length became the wrong ;  
And every loss the men of Jebus bore,  
They still were thought God's enemies the more.  
Thus worn or weakened, well or ill content,  
Submit they must to David's government :  
Impoverished and deprived of all command,  
Their taxes doubled as they lost their land ;  
And, what was harder yet to flesh and blood,  
Their gods disgraced, and burnt like common wood.  
This set the heathen priesthood in a flame ;  
For priests of all religions are the same.  
Of whatsoe'er descent their godhead be,  
Stock, stone, or other homely pedigree,  
In his defence his servants are as bold,  
As if he had been born of beaten gold.  
The Jewish rabbins, though their enemies,  
In this conclude them honest men and wise :  
For 'twas their duty, all the learned think,  
To espouse his cause, by whom they eat and drink.  
From hence began that plot, the nation's curse,  
Bad in itself, but represented worse ;  
Raised in extremes, and in extremes decried ;  
With oaths affirmed, with dying vows denied ;  
Not weighed nor winnowed by the multitude ;  
But swallowed in the mass, unchewed and crude.  
Some truth there was, but dashed and brewed with lies,  
To please the fools, and puzzle all the wise.

Succeeding times did equal folly call,  
Believing nothing, or believing all.  
The Egyptian rites the Jebusites embraced,  
Where gods were recommended by their taste.  
Such savoury deities must needs be good,  
As served at once for worship and for food.\*  
By force they could not introduce these gods,—  
For ten to one in former days was odds,  
So fraud was used, the sacrificer's trade:  
Fools are more hard to conquer than persuade.  
Their busy teachers mingled with the Jews,  
And raked for converts even the court and stews:  
Which Hebrew priests the more unkindly took,  
Because the fleece accompanies the flock,  
Some thought they God's anointed meant to slay  
By guns, invented since full many a day:  
Our author swears it not; but who can know  
How far the devil and Jebusites may go?  
This plot, which failed for want of common sense,  
Had yet a deep and dangerous consequence;  
For as, when raging fevers boil the blood,  
The standing lake soon floats into a flood,  
And every hostile humour, which before  
Slept quiet in its channels, bubbles o'er;  
So several factions, from this first ferment,  
Work up to foam, and threat the government.  
Some by their friends, more by themselves thought wise,  
Opposed the power to which they could not rise.  
Some had in courts been great, and thrown from thence,  
Like fiends were hardened in impenitence.  
Some, by their monarch's fatal mercy, grown  
From pardoned rebels kinsmen to the throne,  
Were raised in power and public office high;  
Strong bands, if bands ungrateful men could tie.  
Of these the false Achitophel, was first;  
A name to all succeeding ages curst:

\* A sneer at the doctrine of transubstantiation, which our author afterwards attempted to defend.—SCOTT.

For close designs and crooked counsels fit ;  
 Sagacious, bold, and turbulent of wit ;  
 Restless, unfixed in principles and place ;  
 In power displeased, impatient of disgrace ;  
 A fiery soul, which worketh out its way,  
 Fretted the pigmy body to decay,  
 And o'er-informed the tenement of clay.  
 A daring pilot in extremity ;  
 Pleased with the danger when the waves went high,  
 He sought the storms ; but, for a calm unfit,  
 Would steer too nigh the sands, to boast his wit.  
 Great wits are sure to madness near allied,  
 And thin partitions do their bounds divide ;  
 Else, why should he, with wealth and honour blest,  
 Refuse his age the needful hours of rest ?  
 Punish a body which he could not please ;  
 Bankrupt of life, yet prodigal of ease ?  
 And all to leave what with his toil he won,  
 To that unfeathered two-legged thing, a son ;  
 Got, while his soul did huddled notions try ;  
 And born a shapeless lump, like anarchy.  
 In friendship false, implacable in hate ;  
 Resolved to ruin or to rule the state,\*  
 To compass this the triple bond he broke ;  
 The pillars of the public safety shook ;  
 And fitted Israel for a foreign yoke ;  
 Then, seized with fear, yet still affecting fame,  
 Usurped a patriot's all-atoning name.†

\* This character of Shaftesbury is drawn with as much truth as power. He hated a calm, lived all his life in intrigues, and in his sixty-second year his 'fiery soul' wore out his small and fragile body. A curious parallel to these famous lines occurs in Fuller's *Profane State*: 'He was of a lean body and visage, as if his eager soul, biting for anger at the clog of his body, desired to fret a passage through it.' The sketch of Shaftesbury's son is not equally just; for, although a man of the meanest mental capacity, he possessed a handsome person, of which he is said to have been ridiculously vain.

† The twelve following lines, qualifying the severity, by doing justice to the judicial integrity of Shaftesbury, were inserted in the second edition.

So easy still it proves in factious times,  
With public zeal to cancel private crimes.  
How safe is treason, and how sacred ill,  
Where none can sin against the people's will?  
Where crowds can wink, and no offence be known,  
Since in another's guilt they find their own!  
Yet fame deserved no enemy can grudge;  
The statesman we abhor, but praise the judge.  
In Israel's courts ne'er sat an Abethdin  
With more discerning eyes, or hands more clean,  
Unbribed, unsought, the wretched to redress;  
Swift of dispatch, and easy of access.  
Oh! had he been content to serve the crown,  
With virtues only proper to the gown;  
Or had the rankness of the soil been freed  
From Cockle, that oppressed the noble seed;  
David for him his tuneful harp had strung,  
And Heaven had wanted one immortal song.  
But wild ambition loves to slide, not stand,  
And fortune's ice prefers to virtue's land.  
Achitophel, grown weary to possess  
A lawful fame, and lazy happiness,  
Disdained the golden fruit to gather free,  
And lent the crowd his arm to shake the tree.  
Now, manifest of crimes contrived long since,  
He stood at bold defiance with his prince;  
Held up the buckler of the people's cause  
Against the crown, and skulked behind the laws.  
The wished occasion of the plot he takes;  
Some circumstances finds, but more he makes.  
By buzzing emissaries, fills the ears  
Of listening crowds with jealousies and fears  
Of arbitrary counsels brought to light,  
And proves the king himself a Jebusite.  
Weak arguments! which yet he knew full well,  
Were strong with people easy to rebel.  
For governed by the moon, the giddy Jews  
Tread the same track when she the prime renews:

And once in twenty years their scribes record,  
 By natural instinct they change their lord.\*  
 Achitophel still wants a chief, and none  
 Was found so fit as warlike Absalom.  
 Not that he wished his greatness to create,  
 For politicians neither love nor hate :  
 But, for he knew his title not allowed,  
 Would keep him still depending on the crowd ;  
 That kingly power, thus ebbing out, might be  
 Drawn to the dregs of a democracy.  
 Him he attempts with studied arts to please,  
 And sheds his venom in such words as these.

Auspicious prince, at whose nativity  
 Some royal planet ruled the southern sky ;  
 Thy longing country's darling and desire ;  
 Their cloudy pillar, and their guardian fire :  
 Their second Moses, whose extended wand  
 Divides the seas, and shows the promised land ;  
 Whose dawning day, in every distant age,  
 Has exercised the sacred prophet's rage :  
 The people's prayer, the glad diviner's theme,  
 The young men's vision, and the old men's dream !  
 Thee, Saviour, thee the nation's vows confess,  
 And never satisfied with seeing, bless :  
 Swift unbespoken pomps thy steps proclaim,  
 And stammering babes are taught to lisp thy name.  
 How long wilt thou the general joy detain,  
 Starve and defraud the people of thy reign ;  
 Content ingloriously to pass thy days,  
 Like one of virtue's fools that feed on praise ;  
 'Till thy fresh glories, which now shine so bright,  
 Grow stale, and tarnish with our daily sight ?  
 Believe me, royal youth, thy fruit must be  
 Or gathered ripe, or rot upon the tree.

\* A slight alteration would redeem the metre :

'How they, by natural instinct, change their lord.'

Although Dr. Johnson says there are some lines in this poem inelegant and improper, this is the only one in which the melody is flattened into prose.

Heaven has to all allotted, soon or late,  
Some lucky revolution of their fate :  
Whose motions, if we watch and guide with skill ;  
(For human good depends on human will,)   
Our fortune rolls as from a smooth descent,  
And from the first impression takes the bent ;  
But, if unseized, she glides away like wind,  
And leaves repenting folly far behind.  
Now, now she meets you with a glorious prize,  
And spreads her locks before you as she flies.  
Had thus old David, from whose loins you spring,  
Not dared when fortune called him to be king,  
At Gath an exile he might still remain,  
And Heaven's anointing oil had been in vain.  
Let his successful youth your hopes engage ;  
But shun the example of declining age :  
Behold him setting in his western skies,  
The shadows lengthening as the vapours rise.  
He is not now, as when, on Jordan's sand,  
The joyful people thronged to see him land,  
Covering the beach and blackening all the strand ;  
But like the prince of angels, from his height  
Comes tumbling downward with diminished light :  
Betrayed by one poor plot to public scorn,  
Our only blessing since his curst return ;  
Those heaps of people which one sheaf did bind,  
Blown off and scattered by a puff of wind.  
What strength can he to your designs oppose,  
Naked of friends, and round beset with foes ?  
If Pharaoh's doubtful succour he should use,  
A foreign aid would more incense the Jews ;  
Proud Egypt would dissembled friendship bring,  
Foment the war, but not support the king :  
Nor would the royal party e'er unite  
With Pharaoh's arms, to assist the Jebusite ;  
Or, if they should, their interest soon would break,  
And with such odious aid make David weak.  
All sorts of men, by my successful arts,  
Abhorring kings, estrange their altered hearts

From David's rule: and 'tis their general cry,  
Religion, commonwealth, and liberty.  
If you, as champion of the public good,  
Add to their arms a chief of royal blood,  
What may not Israel hope, and what applause  
Might such a general gain by such a cause?  
Not barren praise alone, that gaudy flower,  
Fair only to the sight, but solid power;  
And nobler is a limited command,  
Given by the love of all your native land,  
Than a successive title, long and dark,  
Drawn from the mouldy rolls of Noah's ark.

What cannot praise effect in mighty minds,  
When flattery sooths, and when ambition blinds?  
Desire of power, on earth a vicious weed,  
Yet, sprung from high, is of celestial seed;  
In God 'tis glory; and when men aspire,  
'Tis but a spark too much of heavenly fire.  
The ambitious youth, too covetous of fame,  
Too full of angel's metal in his frame,  
Unwarily was led from virtue's ways,  
Made drunk with honour, and debauched with praise.  
Half loth, and half consenting to the ill,  
For royal blood within him struggled still,—  
He thus replied: " And what pretence have I  
To take up arms for public liberty?  
My father governs with unquestioned right,  
The faith's defender, and mankind's delight;  
Good, gracious, just, observant of the laws;  
And Heaven by wonders has espoused his cause.  
Whom has he wronged in all his peaceful reign?  
Who sues for justice to his throne in vain?  
What millions has he pardoned of his foes,  
Whom just revenge did to his wrath expose?  
Mild, easy, humble, studious of our good,  
Inclined to mercy, and averse from blood.  
If mildness ill with stubborn Israel suit,  
His crime is God's beloved attribute.

What could he gain his people to betray,  
 Or change his right for arbitrary sway?  
 Let haughty Pharaoh curse with such a reign  
 His fruitful Nile, and yoke a servile train.  
 If David's rule Jerusalem displease,  
 The dog-star heats their brains to this disease.  
 Why then should I, encouraging the bad,  
 Turn rebel, and run popularly mad?  
 Were he a tyrant, who by lawless might  
 Oppressed the Jews, and raised the Jebusite,  
 Well might I mourn; but nature's holy bands  
 Would curb my spirits and restrain my hands;  
 The people might assert their liberty;  
 But what was right in them were crime in me.  
 His favour leaves me nothing to require,  
 Prevents my wishes, and out-runs desire;  
 What more can I expect while David lives?  
 All but his kingly diadem he gives:  
 And that—But here he paused; then sighing, said—\*  
 Is justly destined for a worthier head,  
 For when my father from his toils shall rest,  
 And late augment the number of the blest,  
 His lawful issue shall the throne ascend,  
 Or the collateral line, where that shall end.  
 His brother, though oppressed with vulgar spite,  
 Yet dauntless, and secure of native right,  
 Of every royal virtue stands possest;  
 Still dear to all the bravest and the best.  
 His courage foes, his friends his truth proclaim;  
 His loyalty the king, the world his fame.  
 His mercy even the offending crowd will find;  
 For sure he comes of a forgiving kind.†

\* ‘This break, where he comes to mention the Duke of York as successor to the crown, is particularly artful.’—Dr. J. WHARTON.

† The flattering character here given of the Duke of York may be usefully contrasted with what Burnet says of him. ‘He was very brave in his youth; and so much magnified by Monsieur Turenne, that, till

Why should I then repine at Heaven's decree,  
Which gives me no pretence to royalty?  
Yet, oh that fate, propitiously inclined,  
Had raised my birth, or had debased my mind;  
To my large soul not all her treasure lent,  
And then betrayed it to a mean descent!  
I find, I find my mounting spirits bold,  
And David's part disdains my mother's mould.  
Why am I scanted by a niggard birth?  
My soul disclaims the kindred of her earth;  
And made for empire, whispers me within,  
Desire of greatness is a god-like sin.

Him staggering so, when hell's dire agent found,  
While fainting virtue scarce maintained her ground,  
He pours fresh forces in, and thus replies:

The eternal God, supremely good and wise,  
Imparts not these prodigious gifts in vain.  
What wonders are reserved to bless your reign!  
Against your will your arguments have shown,  
Such virtue's only given to guide a throne.  
Not that your father's mildness I contemn;  
But manly force becomes the diadem.  
'Tis true he grants the people all they crave;  
And more, perhaps, than subjects ought to have:  
For lavish grants suppose a monarch tame,  
And more his goodness than his wit proclaim.  
But when should people strive their bonds to break,  
If not when kings are negligent, or weak?

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his marriage lessened him, he really clouded the king, and passed for the superior genius. He was naturally candid and sincere, and a firm friend, till affairs and his religion wore out all his first principles and inclinations. He had a great desire to understand affairs, and in order to that he kept a constant journal of all that passed, of which he showed me a great deal. The Duke of Buckingham gave me once a short but severe character of the two brothers. It was the more severe because it was true: the king, he said, could see things if he would; and the duke would see things if he could. He had no true judgment, and was soon determined by those whom he trusted; but he was obstinate against all other advices.'

Let him give on 'till he can give no more,  
The thrifty sanhedrim shall keep him poor ;  
And every shekel, which he can receive,  
Shall cost a limb of his prerogative.  
To ply him with new plots shall be my care ;  
Or plunge him deep in some expensive war ;  
Which when his treasure can no more supply,  
He must, with the remains of kingship, buy  
His faithful friends, our jealousies and fears  
Call Jebusites, and Pharaoh's pensioners ;  
Whom when our fury from his aid has torn,  
He shall be naked left to public scorn.  
The next successor, whom I fear and hate,  
My arts have made obnoxious to the state ;  
Turned all his virtues to his overthrow,  
And gained our elders to pronounce a foe.  
His right, for sums of necessary gold,  
Shall first be pawned, and afterwards be sold ;  
'Till time shall ever-wanting David draw,  
To pass your doubtful title into law ;  
If not, the people have a right supreme  
To make their kings ; for kings are made for them.  
All empire is no more than power in trust,  
Which, when resumed, can be no longer just.  
Succession, for the general good designed,  
In its own wrong a nation cannot bind :  
If altering that the people can relieve,  
Better one suffer than a nation grieve.  
The Jews well know their power : ere Saul they chose  
God was their King, and God they durst depose.  
Urge now your piety, your filial name,  
A father's right, and fear of future fame,  
The public good, that universal call,  
To which even heaven submitted, answers all.  
Nor let his love enchant your generous mind ;  
'Tis nature's trick to propagate her kind.  
Our fond begetters, who would never die,  
Love but themselves in their posterity.

Or let his kindness by the effects be tried,  
Or let him lay his vain pretence aside.  
God said, he loved your father ; could he bring  
A better proof, than to anoint him king ?  
It surely showed he loved the shepherd well,  
Who gave so fair a flock as Israel.  
Would David have you thought his darling son ?  
What means he then to alienate the crown ?  
The name of godly he may blush to bear ;  
Is 't after God's own heart to cheat his heir ?  
He to his brother gives supreme command,  
To you a legacy of barren land ;  
Perhaps the old harp, on which he thrums his lays,  
Or some dull Hebrew ballad in your praise.  
Then the next heir, a prince severe and wise,  
Already looks on you with jealous eyes ;  
Sees through the thin disguises of your arts,  
And marks your progress in the people's hearts ;  
Though now his mighty soul its grief contains .  
He meditates revenge who least complains ;  
And like a lion, slumbering in the way,  
Or sleep dissembling, while he waits his prey,  
His fearless foes within his distance draws,  
Constrains his roaring, and contracts his paws ;  
'Till at the last, his time for fury found,  
He shoots with sudden vengeance from the ground ;  
The prostrate vulgar passes o'er and spares,  
But with a lordly rage his hunters tears.  
Your case no tame expedients will afford ;  
Resolve on death, or conquest by the sword,  
Which for no less a stake than life you draw ;  
And self-defence is nature's eldest law.  
Leave the warm people no considering time :  
For then rebellion may be thought a crime.  
Avail yourself of what occasion gives,  
But try your title while your father lives ;  
And that your arms may have a fair pretence,  
Proclaim you take them in the king's defence ;

Whose sacred life each minute would expose  
To plots, from seeming friends, and secret foes.  
And who can sound the depth of David's soul?  
Perhaps his fear, his kindness may control.  
He fears his brother, though he loves his son,  
For plighted vows too late to be undone.  
If so, by force he wishes to be gained :  
Like women's lechery to seem constrained.  
Doubt not : but, when he most affects the frown,  
Commit a pleasing rape upon the crown.  
Secure his person to secure your cause :  
They, who possess the prince, possess the laws.

He said, and this advice, above the rest,  
With Absalom's mild nature suited best ;  
Unblamed of life, ambition set aside,  
Not stained with cruelty, nor puffed with pride.  
How happy had he been, if destiny  
Had higher placed his birth, or not so high !  
His kingly virtues might have claimed a throne,  
And blest all other countries but his own ;  
But charming greatness since so few refuse,  
'Tis juster to lament him than accuse.  
Strong were his hopes a rival to remove,  
With blandishments to gain the public love ;  
To head the faction while their zeal was hot,  
And popularly prosecute the plot.  
To further this, Achitophel unites  
The malcontents of all the Israelites :  
Whose differing parties he could wisely join,  
For several ends, to serve the same design.  
The best,—and of the princes some were such,—  
Who thought the power of monarchy too much ;  
Mistaken men, and patriots in their hearts ;  
Not wicked, but seduced by impious arts.  
By these the springs of property were bent,  
And wound so high, they cracked the government.  
The next for interest sought to embroil the state,  
To sell their duty at a dearer rate,

And make their Jewish markets of the throne ;  
Pretending public good, to serve their own.  
Others thought kings a useless heavy load,  
Who cost too much, and did too little good.  
These were for laying honest David by,  
On principles of pure good husbandry.  
With them joined all the haranguers of the throng,  
That thought to get preferment by the tongue.  
Who follow next a double danger bring,  
Not only hating David, but the king ;  
The Solymæan rout ; well versed of old,  
In godly faction, and in treason bold ;  
Cowering and quaking at a conqueror's sword,  
But lofty to a lawful prince restored ;  
Saw with disdain an Ethnick plot begun,  
And scorned by Jebusites to be outdone.  
Hot Levites headed these ; who pulled before  
From the ark, which in the Judges' days they bore,  
Resumed their cant, and with a zealous cry,  
Pursued their old beloved theocracy :  
Where sanhedrim and priest enslaved the nation,  
And justified their spoils by inspiration.  
For who so fit to reign as Aaron's race,  
If once dominion they could found in grace ?  
These led the pack ; though not of surest scent,  
Yet deepest mouthed against the government.  
A numerous host of dreaming saints succeed,  
Of the true old enthusiastic breed :  
'Gainst form and order they their power employ,  
Nothing to build, and all things to destroy.  
But far more numerous was the herd of such,  
Who think too little, and who talk too much.  
These out of mere instinct, they knew not why,  
Adored their fathers' God, and property ;  
And, by the same blind benefit of fate,  
The devil and the Jebusite did hate :  
Born to be saved, even in their own despite,  
Because they could not help believing right.

Such were the tools; but a whole Hydra more  
Remains of sprouting heads too long to score.  
Some of their chiefs were princes of the land;  
In the first rank of these did Zimri stand;\*  
A man so various, that he seemed to be  
Not one, but all mankind's epitome:  
Stiff in opinions, always in the wrong,  
Was everything by starts, and nothing long;  
But, in the course of one revolving moon,  
Was chemist, fiddler, statesman, and buffoon;  
Then all for women, painting, rhyming, drinking,  
Besides ten thousand freaks that died in thinking.  
Blest madman, who could every hour employ,  
With something new to wish, or to enjoy!  
Railing and praising were his usual themes;  
And both, to show his judgment, in extremes:  
So over violent, or over civil,  
That every man with him was God or Devil.  
In squandering wealth was his peculiar art;  
Nothing went unrewarded but desert.  
Beggared by fools, whom still he found too late,  
He had his jest, and they had his estate.  
He laughed himself from court; then sought relief  
By forming parties, but could ne'er be chief:

\* De Grammont, who knew Buckingham intimately, confirms in part the justice of this description. 'The Duke of Buckingham,' he says, 'who built the finest towers of cards imaginable, had an agreeable voice—was both the father and mother of scandal—made songs, and invented old women's stories—but his particular talent consisted in turning into ridicule whatever was ridiculous in other people, and in taking them off, even in their presence, without their perceiving it; in short, he knew how to act all parts with so much grace and pleasantry, that it was difficult to do without him, when he had a mind to make himself agreeable.' Burnet's character of him is more comprehensive and severe in proportion. He says, 'he had no principles, no religion, no literature, no conduct. He was true to nothing—not even to himself. He could not keep a secret, fix his thoughts, or govern his estate.' For a still more curious sketch of him, see BUTLER'S *Posthumous Works*. The passage is quoted in the notes to De Grammont. It was a bold venture in Pope to attempt Buckingham's character after Dryden. He suffers by comparison; it is exquisite filigree opposed to solid workmanship. The salient point in Pope's sketch is the picture of Bucking-

For spite of him, the weight of business fell  
On Absalom, and wise Achitophel;  
Thus, wicked but in will, of means bereft,  
He left not faction, but of that was left.

Titles and names 'twere tedious to rehearse  
Of lords, below the dignity of verse.  
Wits, warriors, commonwealths-men, were the best:  
Kind husbands, and mere nobles, all the rest.  
And therefore, in the name of dulness, be  
The well-hung Balaam and cold Caleb free:  
And canting Nadab let oblivion damn,  
Who made new porridge for the paschal lamb.\*  
Let friendship's holy bands some names assure;  
Some their own worth, and some let scorn secure.  
Nor shall the rascal rabble here have place,  
Whom kings no titles gave, and God no grace:  
Not bull-faced Jonas, who could statutes draw  
To mean rebellion, and make treason law.  
But he, though bad, is followed by a worse,  
The wretch, who heaven's anointed dared to curse;  
Shimei—whose youth did early promise bring  
Of zeal to God, and hatred to his king—  
Did wisely from expensive sins refrain,  
And never broke the sabbath but for gain:  
Nor ever was he known an oath to vent,  
Or curse, unless against the government.

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ham's death, which is based on a rumour that turns out to be untrue. It will enhance the interest of Dryden's portrait of Buckingham to insert here what he has elsewhere said of it himself. 'The character of Zimri, in my Absalom, is, in my opinion, worth the whole poem; it is not bloody, but it is ridiculous enough; and he for whom it was intended was too witty to resent it as an injury. If I had railed, I might have suffered for it justly; but I managed my own work more happily, perhaps more dexterously. I avoided the mention of great crimes, and applied myself to the representing of blind sides and little extravagancies; to which, the wittier a man is, he is generally the more obnoxious. It succeeded as I wished; the jest went round, and he was laughed at in his turn who began the frolick.'—*Discourse on Satire*.

\* Lord Howard of Esrick, who seems to have united the characters of a profligate and a pretender to piety, is said, while he was imprisoned in the Tower, to have committed the profanation of taking the sacrament in a mixture of roasted apples and sugar, called lamb's-wool.

Thus heaping wealth, by the most ready way  
Among the Jews, which was—to cheat and pray;  
The city, to reward his pious hate  
Against his master, chose him magistrate.  
His hand a vare\* of justice did uphold;  
His neck was loaded with a chain of gold.  
During his office treason was no crime;  
The sons of Belial had a glorious time:  
For Shimei, though not prodigal of pelf,  
Yet loved his wicked neighbour as himself.  
When two or three were gathered to declaim  
Against the monarch of Jerusalem,  
Shimei was always in the midst of them:  
And, if they cursed the king when he was by,  
Would rather curse than break good company.  
If any durst his factious friends accuse,  
He packed a jury of dissenting Jews;  
Whose fellow-feeling in the godly cause  
Would free the suffering saint from human laws:  
For laws are only made to punish those  
Who serve the king, and to protect his foes.  
If any leisure time he had from power,  
Because 'tis sin to misemploy an hour,  
His business was, by writing to persuade,  
That kings were useless, and a clog to trade:  
And that his noble style he might refine,  
No Rechabite more shunned the fumes of wine.  
Chaste were his cellars, and his shrieval board  
The grossness of a city feast abhorred:  
His cooks with long disuse their trade forgot;  
Cool was his kitchen, though his brains were hot.  
Such frugal virtue malice may accuse;  
But sure 'twas necessary to the Jews:  
For towns, once burnt, such magistrates require,  
As dare not tempt God's providence by fire.

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\* Vara, in Spanish, a wand.

With spiritual food he fed his servants well,  
 But free from flesh, that made the Jews rebel :  
 And Moses' laws he held in more account,  
 For forty days of fasting in the mount.  
 To speak the rest (who better are forgot),  
 Would tire a well-breathed witness of the plot.  
 Yet, Corah, thou shalt from oblivion pass ;  
 Erect thyself, thou monumental brass,  
 High as the serpent of thy metal made,  
 While nations stand secure beneath thy shade.  
 What, though his birth were base, yet comets rise  
 From earthly vapours, ere they shine in skies.  
 Prodigious actions may as well be done  
 By weaver's issue, as by prince's son.  
 This arch-attestor for the public good  
 By that one deed ennobles all his blood.  
 Who ever asked the witnesses' high race,  
 Whose oath with martyrdom did Stephen grace ?  
 Ours was a Levite, and as times went then,  
 His tribe were God Almighty's gentlemen.  
 Sunk were his eyes, his voice was harsh and loud,  
 Sure signs he neither choleric was, nor proud :  
 His long chin proved his wit ; his saint-like grace  
 A church vermillion, and a Moses' face.  
 His memory, miraculously great,  
 Could plots, exceeding man's belief, repeat ;  
 Which, therefore, cannot be accounted lies,  
 For human wit could never such devise.  
 Some future truths are mingled in his book ;  
 But where the witness failed, the prophet spoke :  
 Some things like visionary flight appear ;  
 The spirit caught him up—the Lord knows where ;  
 And gave him his rabbinical degree,  
 Unknown to foreign university.\*

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\* Oates was as odious in personal appearance as in his moral character. 'He was a low man,' says North, 'of an ill-cut very short neck; and his visage and features were most particular. His mouth was the centre of his face, and a compass there would sweep his nose, forehead,

His judgment yet his memory did excel ;  
 Which pieced his wondrous evidence so well,  
 And suited to the temper of the times,  
 Then groaning under Jebusitic crimes.  
 Let Israel's foes suspect his heavenly call,  
 And rashly judge his writ apocryphal ;  
 Our laws for such affronts have forfeits made :  
 He takes his life who takes away his trade.  
 Were I myself in witness Corah's place,  
 The wretch, who did me such a dire disgrace,  
 Should whet my memory, though once forgot,  
 To make him an appendix of my plot.  
 His zeal to heaven made him his prince despise,  
 And load his person with indignities.  
 But zeal peculiar privilege affords,  
 Indulging latitude to deeds and words :  
 And Corah might for Agag's murder call,\*  
 In terms as coarse as Samuel used to Saul.  
 What others in his evidence did join,  
 The best that could be had for love or coin,  
 In Corah's own predicament will fall :  
 For witness is a common name to all.

Surrounded thus, with friends of every sort,  
 ✓ Deluded Absalom forsakes the court ;  
 Impatient of high hopes, urged with renown,  
 And fired with near possession of a crown.  
 The admiring crowd are dazzled with surprise,  
 And on his goodly person feed their eyes.  
 His joy concealed, he sets himself to show ;  
 On each side bowing popularly low :  
 His looks, his gestures, and his words he frames,  
 And with familiar ease repeats their names.

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and chin, within the perimeter.—*Cave quos Deus ipse notavit.*’ The ‘church vermillion and a Moses’ face’ of Dryden, completes the hideous portrait.

\* Sir Edmonbury Godfrey was the magistrate before whom Oates made his declaration. He was afterwards found barbarously murdered in a ditch near Primrose Hill.

Thus formed by nature, furnished out with arts,  
He glides unfelt into their secret hearts.  
Then with a kind compassionating look,  
And sighs, bespeaking pity ere he spoke,  
Few words he said; but easy those and fit,  
More slow than Hybla-drops, and far more sweet.

'I mourn, my countrymen, your lost estate;  
Though far unable to prevent your fate:  
Behold a banished man, for your dear cause  
Exposed a prey to arbitrary laws!  
Yet oh! that I alone could be undone,  
Cut off from empire, and no more a son!  
Now all your liberties a spoil are made;  
Egypt and Tyrus intercept your trade,  
And Jebusites your sacred rites invade.  
My father,—whom with reverence yet I name,—  
Charmed into ease, is careless of his fame;  
And bribed with petty sums of foreign gold,  
Is grown in Bathsheba's embraces old;  
Exalts his enemies, his friends destroys,  
And all his power against himself employs.  
He gives—and let him give—my right away;—  
But why should he his own and yours betray?  
He, only he, can make the nation bleed,  
And he alone from my revenge is freed.  
Take then my tears—with that he wiped his eyes,—  
'Tis all the aid my present power supplies:  
No court informer can these arms accuse;  
These arms may sons against their fathers use.  
And 'tis my wish, the next successor's reign  
May make no other Israelite complain.'

Youth, beauty, graceful action seldom fail;  
But common interest always will prevail;  
And pity never ceases to be shown  
To him who makes the people's wrongs his own.  
The crowd that still believe their kings oppress,  
With lifted hands their young Messiah bless:

Who now begins his progress to ordain  
With chariots, horsemen, and a numerous train ;  
From east to west his glories he displays,  
And, like the sun, the promised land surveys.  
Fame runs before him as the morning star,  
And shouts of joy salute him from afar ;  
Each house receives him as a guardian god,  
And consecrates the place of his abode.  
But hospitable treats did most commend  
Wise Issachar, his wealthy western friend.\*  
This moving court that caught the people's eyes,  
And seemed but pomp, did other ends disguise ;  
Achitophel had formed it, with intent  
To sound the depths, and fathom, where it went,  
The people's hearts, distinguish friends from foes ;  
And try their strength before they came to blows.  
Yet all was coloured with a smooth pretence  
Of specious love, and duty to their prince.  
Religion, and redress of grievances,  
(Two names that always cheat, and always please,)†  
Are often urged ; and good king David's life  
Endangered by a brother and a wife.†

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\* Mr. Thomas Thynne, of Longleate Hall, a country gentleman of large fortune, who showed his attachment to Monmouth by giving him regal entertainments on his progresses. This was the Mr. Thynne who was afterwards assassinated in his carriage, in Pall Mall, by ruffians hired by Count Koningsmark. The story of this assassination is as romantic as it is tragical. The Lady Elizabeth Percy had been married at the age of thirteen to Henry Cavendish, Earl of Ogle, who died within a few months after their marriage. The young and richly dowered widow was immediately surrounded by suitors, and amongst them were Mr. Thynne, and the handsome adventurer Count Koningsmark. Her friends, to preserve her against the fascinations of Koningsmark, hastily contracted her to Mr. Thynne, but before the marriage was solemnized, the successful lover was murdered. The lady does not appear to have been much affected by the circumstance, for in three months afterwards she was married to the Duke of Somerset.

† One of the monstrous accusations fabricated by Oates was a charge against the queen of a design upon the life of the king. Dangerfield also charged the Duke of York with having instigated him to concoct the plot, and assassinate the king.

Thus in a pageant show a plot is made ;  
And peace itself is war in masquerade.  
Oh foolish Israel ! never warned by ill !  
Still the same bait, and circumvented still !  
Did ever men forsake their present ease,  
In midst of health imagine a disease,  
Take pains contingent mischiefs to foresee,  
Make heirs for monarchs, and for God decree ?  
What shall we think ? Can people give away,  
Both for themselves and sons, their native sway ?  
Then they are left defenceless to the sword  
Of each unbounded, arbitrary lord ;  
And laws are vain, by which we right enjoy,  
If kings unquestioned can those laws destroy.  
Yet if the crowd be judge of fit and just,  
And kings are only officers in trust,  
Then this resuming covenant was declared  
When kings were made, or is for ever barred.  
If those who gave the sceptre, could not tie,  
By their own deed their own posterity,  
How then could Adam bind his future race ?  
How could his forfeit on mankind take place ?  
Or how could heavenly justice damn us all,  
Who ne'er consented to our father's fall ?  
Then kings are slaves to those whom they command,  
And tenants to their people's pleasure stand.  
Add, that the power, for property allowed,  
Is mischievously seated in the crowd ;  
For who can be secure of private right,  
If sovereign sway may be dissolved by might ?  
Nor is the people's judgment always true :  
The most may err as grossly as the few ;  
And faultless kings run down by common cry,  
For vice, oppression, and for tyranny.  
What standard is there in a fickle rout,  
Which, flowing to the mark, runs faster out ?  
Nor only crowds but Sanhedrims may be  
Infected with this public lunacy,

And share the madness of rebellious times,  
To murder monarchs for imagined crimes.  
If they may give and take whene'er they please,  
Not kings alone, the Godhead's images,  
But government itself, at length must fall  
To nature's state, where all have right to all.  
Yet, grant our lords, the people, kings can make,  
What prudent men a settled throne would shake?  
For whatsoe'er their sufferings were before,  
That change they covet makes them suffer more.  
All other errors but disturb a state;  
But innovation is the blow of fate.  
If ancient fabrics nod, and threat to fall,  
To patch their flaws, and buttress up the wall,  
Thus far 'tis duty: but here fix the mark;  
For all beyond it is to touch the ark.  
To change foundations, cast the frame anew,  
Is work for rebels, who base ends pursue;  
At once divine and human laws control,  
And mend the parts by ruin of the whole,  
The tampering world is subject to this curse,  
To physic their disease into a worse.

Now what relief can righteous David bring  
How fatal 'tis to be too good a king!  
Friends he has few, so high the madness grows;  
Who dare be such must be the people's foes.  
Yet some there were, e'en in the worst of days;  
Some let me name, and naming is to praise.

In this short file Barzillai first appears;  
Barzillai, crowned with honour and with years.  
Long since the rising rebels he withheld  
In regions waste beyond the Jordan's flood:  
Unfortunately brave to buoy the state;  
But sinking underneath his master's fate:  
In exile with his godlike prince he mourned;  
For him he suffered, and with him returned.  
The court he practised, not the courtier's art:  
Large was his wealth, but larger was his heart,

Which well the noblest objects knew to choose,  
The fighting warrior, and recording muse.  
His bed could once a fruitful issue boast ;  
Now more than half a father's name is lost.  
His eldest hope, with every grace adorned,  
By me, so heaven will have it, always mourned,  
And always honoured, snatched in manhood's prime  
By unequal fates, and providence's crime :  
Yet not before the goal of honour won,  
All parts fulfilled of subject and of son :  
Swift was the race, but short the time to run.  
Oh, narrow circle, but of power divine,  
Scanted in space, but perfect in thy line !  
By sea, by land, thy matchless worth was known,  
Arms thy delight, and war was all thy own :  
Thy force infused the fainting Tyrians propped ;  
And haughty Pharaoh found his fortune stopped.  
Oh ancient honour ! oh unconquered hand,  
Whom foes unpunished never could withstand !  
But Israel was unworthy of his name :  
Short is the date of all immoderate fame.  
It looks as heaven our ruin had designed,  
And durst not trust thy fortune and thy mind.  
Now, free from earth, thy disencumbered soul  
Mounts up, and leaves behind the clouds and starry pole :  
From thence thy kindred legions mayst thou bring,  
To aid the guardian angel of thy king.

Here stop, my muse, here cease thy painful flight ;  
No pinions can pursue immortal height :  
Tell good Barzillai thou canst sing no more,  
And tell thy soul she should have fled before :  
Or fled she with his life, and left this verse  
To hang on her departed patron's hearse ?  
Now take thy sleepy flight from heaven, and see  
If thou canst find on earth another he :  
Another he would be too hard to find ;  
See then whom thou canst see not far behind.

Zadoc the priest, whom, shunning power and place,  
 His lowly mind advanced to David's grace.  
 With him the Sagan of Jerusalem,\*  
 Of hospitable soul, and noble stem;  
 Him of the western dome, whose weighty sense  
 Flows in fit words, and heavenly eloquence.  
 The prophet's sons, by such example led,  
 To learning and to loyalty were bred:  
 For colleges on bounteous kings depend,  
 And never rebel was to arts a friend.  
 To these succeed the pillars of the laws;  
 Who best can plead, and best can judge a cause.  
 Next them a train of loyal peers ascend;  
 Sharp-judging Adriel, the muses' friend,  
 Himself a muse: in Sanhedrim's debate  
 True to his prince, but not a slave of state:  
 Whom David's love with honours did adorn,  
 That from his disobedient son were torn.  
 Jotham, of piercing wit, and pregnant thought;  
 Endued by nature, and by learning taught,  
 To move assemblies, who but only tried  
 The worse awhile, then chose the better side:  
 Nor chose alone, but turned the balance too;  
 So much the weight of one brave man can do.  
 Hushai, the friend of David in distress;  
 In public storms, of manly steadfastness;  
 By foreign treaties he informed his youth,  
 And joined experience to his native truth.  
 His frugal care supplied the wanting throne;  
 Frugal for that, but bounteous of his own:  
 'Tis easy conduct when exchequers flow,  
 But hard the task to manage well the low;  
 For sovereign power is too depressed or high,  
 When kings are forced to sell, or crowds to buy.  
 Indulge one labour more, my weary muse,  
 For Amiel: who can Amiel's praise refuse?

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\* Dolben, Bishop of Rochester and Dean of Westminster.

Of ancient race by birth, but nobler yet  
In his own worth, and without title great :  
The Sanhedrim long time as chief he ruled,  
Their reason guided, and their passion cooled :  
So dextrous was he in the crown's defence,  
So formed to speak a loyal nation's sense,  
That, as their band was Israel's tribes in small,  
So fit was he to represent them all.  
Now rasher charioteers the seat ascend,  
Whose loose careers his steady skill commend :  
They, like the unequal ruler of the day,  
Misguide the seasons, and mistake the way ;  
While he, withdrawn, at their mad labours smiles,  
And safe enjoys the sabbath of his toils.

These were the chief, a small but faithful band  
Of worthies, in the breach who dared to stand,  
And tempt the united fury of the land.  
With grief they viewed such powerful engines bent,  
To batter down the lawful government.  
A numerous faction, with pretended frights,  
In Sanhedrims to plume the regal rights ;  
The true successor from the court removed ;\*  
The plot, by hireling witnesses, improved.  
These ills they saw, and, as their duty bound,  
They showed the king the danger of the wound ;  
That no concessions from the throne would please,  
But lenitives fomented the disease :  
That Absalom, ambitious of the crown,  
Was made the lure to draw the people down :  
That false Achitophel's pernicious hate  
Had turned the plot to ruin church and state :

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\* On the eve of the meeting of parliament in October, 1680, the king, alarmed at the attitude of the commons, in reference to the Exclusion Bill, urged the Duke of York to retire from the kingdom. The duke appealed to the council, and eleven out of eighteen supported him; but the king overruled them, and the duke left London the day before parliament met. It is supposed that he apprehended an impeachment, for he asked the king to grant him a pardon before he departed, which the king refused.

The council violent, the rabble worse ;  
That Shimei taught Jerusalem to curse.

With all these loads of injuries opprest,  
And long revolving in his careful breast  
The event of things, at last, his patience tired,  
Thus, from his royal throne, by Heaven inspired,  
The godlike David spoke ; with awful fear  
His train their Maker in their master hear.\*

Thus long have I, by native mercy swayed,  
My wrongs dissembled, my revenge delayed ;  
So willing to forgive the offending age ;  
So much the father did the king assuage.  
But now so far my clemency they slight,  
The offenders question my forgiving right,  
That one was made for many, they contend ;  
But 'tis to rule ; for that's a monarch's end.  
They call my tenderness of blood, my fear ;  
Though manly tempers can the longest bear.  
Yet since they will divert my native course,  
'Tis time to show I am not good by force.  
Those heaped affronts, that haughty subjects bring,  
Are burdens for a camel, not a king.  
Kings are the public pillars of the state,  
Born to sustain and prop the nation's weight :  
If my young Sampson will pretend a call†  
To shake the column, let him share the fall :

\* The speech here assigned to David is a paraphrase of the chief points of the speech actually delivered at Oxford, by Charles. Mr. Malone prints the parallel passages. Sir Walter Scott seems to have fallen into a mistake in saying that 'Spence, on the authority of a priest, whom he often met at Mr. Pope's, has stated, that the king obliged Dryden to put his speech to the Oxford parliament into verse.' The passage in Spence is a little involved, but I think there is no doubt the authority is Mr. Pope himself. Spence's words are : 'This was said [alluding to a previous observation] by a priest that often met at Mr. Pope's ; and he [Mr. Pope] seemed to confirm it ; adding, that King Charles obliged Dryden to put his Oxford speech, &c.'—SPENCE, by SINGER, p. 172.

† The four succeeding lines were added in the Second Edition.

But oh, that yet he would repent and live!  
How easy 'tis for parents to forgive!  
With how few tears a pardon might be won  
From nature, pleading for a darling son!  
Poor, pitied youth, by my paternal care  
Raised up to all the height his frame could bear!  
Had God ordained his fate for empire born,  
He would have given his soul another turn:  
Gulled with a patriot's name, whose modern sense  
Is one that would by law supplant his prince;  
The people's brave, the politician's tool;  
Never was patriot yet, but was a fool.  
Whence comes it, that religion and the laws  
Should more be Absalom's than David's cause?  
His old instructor, ere he lost his place,  
Was never thought indued with so much grace.  
Good heavens, how faction can a patriot paint!  
My rebel ever proves my people's saint.  
Would they impose an heir upon the throne?  
Let Sanhedrims be taught to give their own.  
A king's at least a part of government;  
And mine as requisite as their consent:  
Without my leave a future king to choose,  
Infers a right the present to depose.  
True, they petition me to approve their choice:  
But Esau's hands suit ill with Jacob's voice.  
My pious subjects for my safety pray;  
Which to secure, they take my power away.  
From plots and treasons Heaven preserve my years,  
But save me most from my petitioners!  
Unsatiate as the barren womb, or grave;  
God cannot grant so much as they can crave.  
What then is left, but with a jealous eye  
To guard the small remains of royalty?  
The law shall still direct my peaceful sway,  
And the same law teach rebels to obey:  
Votes shall no more established power control,—  
Such votes, as make a part exceed the whole.

No groundless clamours shall my friends remove,  
Nor crowds have power to punish ere they prove;  
For gods, and godlike kings their care express,  
Still to defend their servants in distress.

Oh, that my power to saving were confined!  
Why am I forced, like Heaven, against my mind,  
To make examples of another kind?

Must I at length the sword of justice draw?  
Oh, curst effects of necessary law!

How ill my fear they by my mercy scan!  
Beware the fury of a patient man.

Law they require; let law then show her face;  
They could not be content to look on grace,  
Her hinder parts, but with a daring eye,  
To tempt the terror of her front, and die.  
By their own arts 'tis righteously decreed,  
Those dire artificers of death shall bleed.

Against themselves their witnesses will swear,  
Till, viper-like, their mother-plot they tear;  
And suck for nutriment that bloody gore,  
Which was their principle of life before.

Their Belial with their Beelzebub will fight;  
Thus on my foes, my foes shall do me right.  
Nor doubt the event; for factious crowds engage,  
In their first onset, all their brutal rage.

Then let them take an unresisted course;  
Retire, and traverse, and delude their force:  
But when they stand all breathless, urge the fight,  
And rise upon them with redoubled might:  
For lawful power is still superior found;  
When long driven back at length it stands the ground.

He said: the Almighty, nodding, gave consent;  
And peals of thunder shook the firmament.  
Henceforth a series of new time began,  
The mighty years in long procession ran;  
Once more the godlike David was restored,  
And willing nations knew their lawful lord.

## ABSAJOM AND ACHITOPHEL.

## PART THE SECOND.

[THE Second Part appeared on the 10th of Nov. 1682. In the interval Dryden had published the *Medal* and *Mac Flecknoe*, both bearing upon the political and literary feuds of the day. This continuation of the poem was a comparative failure; for which many causes may be assigned. The times had changed. Shaftesbury and Monmouth had begun to distrust each other; the Duke of York had returned from exile; the power of the king had been re-established; the subject was exhausted: the allegory was worn out; and, worse than all, the greater portion of this second part of the poem was written by Nahum Tate. This alone would be enough to account for its indifferent reception. The public must have detected the slow hand of drudgery at once. Tate had a great argument and a great example before him, and must be allowed to have risen a little above himself on the occasion. But his lines, notwithstanding, are no better than a mechanical and lifeless imitation of the energy and pomp of Dryden. There is no impulse in them. We miss the headlong flood, and find nothing in its place but a shallow and sluggish current made to bubble up here and there over artificial rocks. It is said that Dryden revised the work, and it is known that he contributed a certain entire passage, which will be indicated in its place, although it scarcely requires to be distinguished from the rest. It carries its own mark. His revisions, however, only make the poverty of the general material more apparent. Wherever we can trace, or fancy we can trace, his touches, the surrounding meanness becomes painfully distinct. This sort of revision is like putting lights in some shabby entry, by which the squalidness of the interior is fully exposed; or it may be compared to the process for reviving old clothes, which takes out the

stains, but shows more clearly than before the threadbare texture beneath.

Why Dryden transferred the continuation of the poem to Nahum Tate is not known. Scott says, that he ‘deputed him to be his assistant,’ from ‘being unwilling again to undertake a task upon which he had repeatedly laboured;’ but there is no authority for that statement, nor had he repeatedly laboured upon the task, the *Medal* being special in its application, and *Mac Flecknoe* being devoted exclusively to Shadwell. The probability is, that he found this sort of writing rather thankless work, and felt the necessity of devoting himself to more profitable pursuits. As for the melancholy Tate, he got nothing by taking up the mantle of his friend. For all his loyalty and namby-pamby piety—his *Absalom* and his *Psalm*s—neither the court nor the church helped him in his need, and his end was as wretched as his doggrel. Scott has a curious criticism on what he calls his ‘talent for poetry,’ which, he says, ‘amounted to cold mediocrity; had he been a man of fortune, it would have raised him to the rank of an easy sonnet writer, or a person of wit and honour about town.’ How fortune could have mended his verse, or endowed him with wit and honour passes all speculation. ‘Wit,’ says Selden, ‘must grow like fingers; if it be taken from others, ’tis like plums stuck upon blackthorns; there they are for a while, but they come to nothing.’ It was worse for Tate, that he was not a man of fortune; but better for us, if we have, thereby, escaped his easy sonnets.

The principal characters drawn by Dryden in his contribution to this second part are those of Settle and Shadwell, under the names of Doeg and Og. He treats them both with the utmost contempt, and, descending to personal traits, has bequeathed to us an immortal portrait of Shadwell, reeling home drunk from a ‘treason tavern,’ behind his flambeau,

Round as a globe, and liquored every chink.

Dryden is said to have been jealous of rivals; but his scorn absorbed his envy. The other persons he has impaled are

Robert Ferguson, a fanatical independent preacher, and turbulent demagogue, under the name of Judas; Phaleg—James Forbes, who had been a travelling tutor in the family of the Duke of Ormond, and was accused of repaying his patron's favours by a scandalous amour under his roof; Ben Jochanan—the Reverend Samuel Johnson, who defended the right of private judgment, in an able work, entitled *Julian the Apostate* (hence called Julian Johnson in Spence's Anecdotes), and who suffered persecution for his opinions with a heroism which inspired even his enemies with respect; Balak—Dr. (afterwards Bishop) Burnet, who in the preceding year had published the second volume of his *History of the Reformation*; Mephibosheth—Samuel Pordage, a poetaster, who had awakened Dryden's vengeance, by an attack upon *Absalom and Achitophel*, in which he hunted the author's political and religious tergiversations through some shambling doggrel; and Uzza—Jack Hall, one of the ‘men about town,’ who scribbled occasional verses. The additional characters introduced by Tate, are Ishban—Sir Robert Clayton, a zealous whig, alderman of London, and one of its representatives; Rabsheka—Sir Thomas Player, chamberlain of London, and also one of its representatives; Arod—Sir William Waller, who detected the meal-tub plot; Jothran—Admiral Legge, afterwards created Earl of Dartmouth; Benaiah—George Edward Sackville, a gentleman of family and zealous partisan of the Duke of York; Bezaliel—the Marquis of Worcester, afterwards Duke of Beaufort; Abdael—the second Duke of Albemarle, son of Monk; Eliab—the Earl of Arlington; Othriel—Duke of Grafton (natural son of Charles II. by the Duchess of Cleveland); Helon—Earl of Feversham; Amri—Heneage Finch, Earl of Winchilsea, who succeeded Shaftesbury as lord keeper; Sheva—Sir Roger L'Estrange; Ziloah—Sir John Moore, lord mayor of London; Ziph and Shimei—Pilkington and Shute, the sheriffs; and Asaph—Dryden himself! For some unexplained reason, Tate alters the allegorical geography, and Hebron, which formerly represented Holland, here stands for Scotland.]

## TO THE READER.

IN the year 1680 Mr. Dryden undertook the poem of *Absalom and Achitophel*, upon the desire of King Charles the Second. The performance was applauded by every one; and several persons pressing him to write a second part, he, upon declining it himself, spoke to Mr. Tait to write one, and gave him his advice in the direction of it; and that part beginning page 276, line 3,

Next these, a troop of busy spirits press,  
and ending page 282, line 6,

To talk like Doeg, and to write like thee,  
containing near two hundred verses, were entirely Mr. Dryden's compositions, besides some touches in other places.—DERRICK.

## ABSALOM AND ACHITOPHEL.

## PART THE SECOND.

Si quis tamen hæc quoque, Si quis captus amore leget.

SINCE men, like beasts, each other's prey were made,\*  
Since trade began, and priesthood grew a trade,  
Since realms were formed, none sure so curst as those  
That madly their own happiness oppose;  
There Heaven itself, and godlike kings, in vain  
Shower down the manna of a gentle reign;  
While pampered crowds to mad sedition run,  
And monarchs by indulgence are undone.  
Thus David's clemency was fatal grown,  
While wealthy faction awed the wanting throne.  
For now their sovereign's orders to contemn  
Was held the charter of Jerusalem;  
His rights to invade, his tributes to refuse,  
A privilege peculiar to the Jews;  
As if from heavenly call this licence fell,  
And Jacob's seed were chosen, to rebel!

\* At the very opening the frog bloats himself with imitation. Compare this with the opening of the First Part:—

'In pious times, ere priestcraft did begin,' &c.

Achitophel, with triumph, sees his crimes  
Thus suited to the madness of the times ;  
And Absalom, to make his hopes succeed,  
Of flattering charms no longer stands in need ;  
While fond of change, though ne'er so dearly bought,  
Our tribes outstrip the youth's ambitious thought ;  
His swiftest hopes with swifter homage meet,  
And crowd their servile necks beneath his feet.  
Thus to his aid while pressing tides repair,  
He mounts, and spreads his streamers in the air.  
The charms of empire might his youth mislead,  
But what can our besotted Israel plead ?  
Swayed by a monarch, whose serene command  
Seems half the blessing of our promised land.  
Whose only grievance is excess of ease ;  
Freedom our pain, and plenty our disease !  
Yet, as all folly would lay claim to sense,  
And wickedness ne'er wanted a pretence,  
With arguments they'd make their treason good,  
And righteous David's self with slanders load :  
That arts of foreign sway he did affect,  
And guilty Jebusites from law protect,  
Whose very chiefs, convict, were never freed,  
Nay we have seen their sacrificers bleed !  
Accusers' infamy is urged in vain,  
While in the bounds of sense they did contain,  
But soon they launched into the unfathomed tide,  
And in the depths they knew disdained to ride.  
For probable discoveries to dispense,  
Was thought below a pensioned evidence ;  
Mere truth was dull, nor suited with the port  
Of pampered Corah, when advanced to court.  
No less than wonders now they will impose,  
And projects void of grace or sense disclose.  
Such was the change on pious Michal brought ;  
Michal, that ne'er was cruel even in thought ;  
The best of queens, and most obedient wife,  
Impeached of curst designs on David's life !

His life, the theme of her eternal prayer,  
'Tis scarce so much his guardian angel's care.  
Not summer morns such mildness can disclose,  
The Hermon lily, nor the Sharon rose.  
Neglecting each vain pomp of majesty,  
Transported Michal feeds her thoughts on high.  
She lives with angels, and, as angels do,  
Quits heaven sometimes to bless the world below;  
Where, cherished by her bounty's plenteous spring,  
Reviving widows smile, and orphans sing.  
Oh! when rebellious Israel's crimes at height,  
Are threatened with her Lord's approaching fate,  
The piety of Michal then remain  
In Heaven's remembrance, and prolong his reign.

Less desolation did the pest pursue,  
That from Dan's limits to Beersheba slew;  
Less fatal the repeated wars of Tyre;  
And less Jerusalem's avenging fire,  
With gentler terror these our state o'er-ran,  
Than since our evidencing days began!  
On every cheek a pale confusion sat,  
Continued fear beyond the worst of fate!  
Trust was no more, art, science, useless made,  
All occupations lost, but Corah's trade.  
Meanwhile, a guard on modest Corah wait,  
If not for safety, needful yet for state.  
Well might he deem each peer and prince his slave,  
And lord it o'er the tribes which he could save:  
Even vice in him was virtue—what sad fate,  
But for his honesty, had seized our state?  
And with what tyranny had we been curst,  
Had Corah never proved a villain first?  
To have told his knowledge of the intrigue in gross,  
Had been, alas, to our deponent's loss:  
The travelled Levite had the experience got,  
To husband well, and make the best of 's plot;  
And therefore, like an evidence of skill,  
With wise reserves secured his pension still;

Nor quite of future power himself bereft,  
But limbos large for unbelievers left,  
And now his writ such reverence had got,  
'Twas worse than plotting to suspect his plot.  
Some were so well convinced, they made no doubt  
Themselves to help the founder'd swearers out.  
Some had their sense imposed on by their fear,  
But more for interest sake believe and swear:  
Even to that height with some the frenzy grew,  
They raged to find their danger not prove true,

Yet, than all these a viler crew remain,  
Who with Achitophel the cry maintain;  
Not urged by fear, nor through misguided sense,  
(Blind zeal and starving need had some pretence),  
But for the good old cause, that did excite  
The original rebels' wiles,—revenge and spite.  
These raise the plot, to have the scandal thrown  
Upon the bright successor of the crown,  
Whose virtue with such wrongs they had pursued,  
As seemed all hope of pardon to exclude.  
Thus, while on private ends their zeal is built,  
The cheated crowd applaud, and share their guilt.

Such practices as these, too gross to lie  
Long unobserved by each discerning eye,  
The more judicious Israelites unspelled,  
Though still the charm the giddy rabble held;  
Even Absalom amidst the dazzling beams  
Of empire, and ambition's flattering dreams,  
Perceives the plot, too foul to be excused,  
To aid designs, no less pernicious, used.  
And, filial sense yet striving in his breast  
Thus to Achitophel his doubts exprest:

‘ Why are my thoughts upon a crown employed,  
Which once obtained can be but half enjoyed?  
Not so when virtue did my arms require,  
And to my father's wars I flew entire.  
My regal power how will my foes resent,  
When I myself have scarce my own consent? ’

Give me a son's unblemished truth again,  
Or quench the sparks of duty that remain.  
How slight to force a throne that legions guard  
The task to me; to prove unjust, how hard!  
And if the imagined guilt thus wound my thought,  
What will it, when the tragic scene is wrought?  
Dire war must first be conjured from below,  
The realm we'd rule we first must overthrow;  
And when the civil furies are on wing  
That blind and undistinguished slaughterers fling,  
Who knows what impious chance may reach the king?  
Oh! rather let me perish in the strife,  
Than have my crown the price of David's life!  
Or, if the tempest of the war he stand,  
In peace, some vile officious villain's hand  
His soul's anointed temple may invade,  
Or prest by clamorous crowds, myself be made  
His murderer; rebellious crowds, whose guilt  
Shall dread his vengeance till his blood be spilt;  
Which, if my filial tenderness oppose,  
Since to the empire by their arms I rose,  
Those very arms on me shall be employed,  
A new usurper crowned, and I destroyed:  
The same pretence of public good will hold,  
And new Achitophels be found as bold  
To urge the needful change,—perhaps the old.'

He said. The statesman with a smile replies,  
A smile that did his rising spleen disguise,—  
' My thoughts presumed our labours at an end,  
And are we still with conscience to contend?  
Whose want in kings, as needful is allowed,  
As 'tis for them to find it in the crowd.  
Far in the doubtful passage you are gone,  
And only can be safe by pressing on.  
The crown's true heir, a prince severe and wise,  
Has viewed your motions long with jealous eyes:  
Your person's charms, your more prevailing arts,  
And marked your progress in the people's hearts,

Whose patience is the effect of stinted power,  
 But treasures vengeance for the fatal hour;\*  
 And if remote the peril he can bring,  
 Your present danger's greater from the king.  
 Let not a parent's name deceive your sense,  
 Nor trust the father in a jealous prince!  
 Your trivial faults if he could so resent,  
 To doom you little less than banishment,  
 What rage must your presumption since inspire!  
 Against his orders your return from Tyre;  
 Nor only so, but with a pomp more high,  
 And open court of popularity,  
 The factious tribes'—‘And this reproof from thee?’  
 The prince replies—‘O statesman's winding skill,  
 They first condemn that first advised the ill’—  
 ‘Illustrious youth,’ returned Achitophel,  
 ‘Misconstrue not the words that mean you well.  
 The course you steer I worthy blame conclude,  
 But 'tis because you leave it unpursued.  
 A monarch's crown with fate surrounded lies,  
 Who reach, lay hold on death that miss the prize.  
 Did you for this expose yourself to show,  
 And to the crowd bow popularly low;  
 For this your glorious progress next ordain,  
 With chariots, horsemen, and a numerous train;

\* This passage is a wholesale transplantation from the First Part, hardly disfigured enough for the purpose of disguise. Thus Dryden :—

‘Then the next heir, a prince severe and wise,  
 Already looks on you with jealous eyes;  
 Sees through the thin disguises of your arts,  
 And marks your progress in the people's hearts,  
 Though now his mighty soul its grief contains,  
 He meditates revenge who least complains.’

In other places whole lines are bodily transferred, and portional parts of lines minted into spurious ‘Bromingham groats,’ as counterfeit money was called in those days. A couplet in one of the current lampoons exactly hits the case—

‘The wretch that stamped it got immortal fame,  
 ’Twas coined by stealth, like groats at Birmingham.’

With fame before you, like the morning star,  
And shouts of joy saluting from afar ?  
Oh from the heights you've reached but take a view,  
Scarce leading Lucifer could fall like you !  
And must I here my shipwrecked arts bemoan ?  
Have I for this so oft made Israel groan ?  
Your single interest with the nation weighed,  
And turned the scale where your desires were laid !  
Even when at helm a course so dangerous moved  
To land your hopes, as my removal proved.'

'I not dispute,' the royal youth replies,  
'The known perfection of your policies ;  
Nor in Achitophel yet grudge or blame  
The privilege that statesmen ever claim ;  
Who private interest never yet pursued,  
But still pretended 'twas for other's good :  
What politician yet e'er 'scaped his fate,  
Who saving his own neck not saved the state ?  
From hence on every humorous wind that veered,  
With shifted sails a several course you steered.  
What from a sway did David e'er pursue,  
That seemed like absolute, but sprung from you ?  
Who at your instance quasht each penal law,  
That kept dissenting factious Jews in awe ;  
And who suspends fixt laws may abrogate,  
That done, form new, and so enslave the state.  
Even property, whose champion now you stand,  
And seem for this the idol of the land,  
Did ne'er sustain such violence before,  
As when your counsel shut the royal store ;  
Advice, that ruin to whole tribes procured,  
But secret kept till your own banks secured.  
Recount with this the triple covenant broke,  
And Israel fitted for a foreign yoke ;  
Nor here your counsel's fatal progress stayed,  
But sent our levied powers to Pharaoh's aid.  
Hence Tyre and Israel, low in ruins laid,  
And Egypt, once theirs corn, their common terror made.

Even yet of such a season can we dream,  
When royal rights you made your darling theme;  
For power unlimited could reasons draw,  
And place prerogative above the law;  
Which on your fall from office grew unjust,  
The laws made king, the king a slave in trust:  
Whom with state craft, to interest only true,  
You now accuse of ills contrived by you.'

To this hell's agent—' Royal youth, fix here,  
Let interest be the star by which you steer.  
Hence, to repose your trust in me was wise,  
Whose interest most in your advancement lies;  
A tie so firm as always will avail,  
When friendship, nature, and religion fail.  
On ours the safety of the crowd depends,  
Secure the crowd, and we obtain our ends,  
Whom I will cause so far our guilt to share,  
Till they are made our champions by their fear.  
What opposition can your rival bring,  
While Sanhedrims are jealous of the king?  
His strength as yet in David's friendship lies,  
And what can David's self without supplies?  
Who with exclusive bills must now dispense,  
Debar the heir, or starve in his defence.  
Conditions which our elders ne'er will quit,  
And David's justice never can admit.  
Or forced by wants his brother to betray,  
To your ambition next he clears the way;  
For if succession once to nought they bring,  
Their next advance removes the present king:  
Persisting else his senates to dissolve,  
In equal hazard shall his reign involve.  
Our tribes, whom Pharaoh's power so much alarms,  
Shall rise without their prince to oppose his arms  
Nor boots it on what cause at first they join;  
Their troops, once up, are tools for our design.  
At least such subtle covenants shall be made,  
Till peace itself is war in masquerade.

Associations of mysterious sense,  
 Against, but seeming for, the king's defence:  
 Even on their courts of justice fitters draw,  
 And from our agents muzzle up their law.  
 By which a conquest if we fail to make,  
 'Tis a drawn game at worst, and we secure our stake.'

He said, and for the dire success depends  
 On various sects, by common guilt made friends;  
 Whose heads, though ne'er so differing in their creed,  
 I' th' point of treason yet were well agreed.  
 Amongst these, extorting Ishban first appears,  
 Pursued by a meagre troop of bankrupt heirs.  
 Blest times when Ishban, he whose occupation  
 So long has been to cheat, reforms the nation!  
 Ishban of conscience suited to his trade,  
 As good a saint as usurer ever made.  
 Yet Mammon has not so engrost him quite,  
 But Belial lays as large a claim of spite;  
 Who, for those pardons from his prince he draws,  
 Returns reproaches, and cries up the cause.  
 That year in which the city he did sway,  
 He left rebellion in a hopeful way;  
 Yet his ambition once was found so bold,  
 To offer talents of extorted gold,  
 (Could David's wants have so been bribed) to shame  
 And scandalize our peerage with his name;  
 For which, his dear sedition he'd forswear,  
 And even turn loyal, to be made a peer.  
 Next him, let railing Rabsheka have place,  
 So full of zeal he has no need of grace;  
 A saint that can both flesh and spirit use,  
 Alike haunt conventicles and the stews:  
 Of whom the question difficult appears,  
 If most i' th' preachers' or the bawds' arrears.  
 What caution could appear too much in him  
 That keeps the treasure of Jerusalem!  
 Let David's brother but approach the town,  
 'Double our guards,' he cries, 'we are undone!'

Protesting that he dare not sleep in 's bed,  
Lest he should rise next morn without his head.\*

Next these, a troop of busy spirits press,†  
Of little fortunes, and of conscience less ;  
With them the tribe, whose luxury had drained  
Their banks, in former sequestrations gained ;  
Who rich and great by past rebellions grew,  
And long to fish the troubled streams anew.  
Some, future hopes, some, present payment draws ;  
To sell their conscience and espouse the cause ;  
Such stipends those vile hirelings best befit,  
Priests without grace, and poets without wit.  
Shall that false Hebronite escape our curse,  
Judas, that keeps the rebel's pension-purse ;  
Judas, that pays the treason-writer's fee ;  
Judas, that well deserves his namesake's tree ;  
Who at Jerusalem's own gates erects  
His college for a nursery of sects ;  
Young prophets with an early care secures,  
And with the dung of his own arts manures !  
What have the men of Hebron here to do ?  
What part in Israel's promised land have you ?  
Here Phaleg, the lay Hebronite, is come,  
'Cause like the rest he could not live at home ;  
Who from his own possessions could not drain  
An omer even of Hebronitish grain,

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\* On the Duke of York's return to London from Scotland, his adversaries declared that he had incendiary and murderous designs upon the city. He brought an action, under the statute *de scandalis magnatum*, against Pilkington, who had just served the office of sheriff, for uttering the words that 'the duke had fired the city, and was on his way from Scotland to cut the citizens' throats.' He laid his damages at £100,000, and obtained them in full from a frightened or slavish jury. One of the witnesses, Sir Patience Ward, who said he was present, but did not hear the words, was sentenced to the pillory as a perjurer. Pilkington's real crime was, that he refused to join a deputation to congratulate the duke on his return.

† All the lines that follow, to the line—

‘ To talk like Doeg, and to write like thee,’  
constitute Dryden's acknowledged portion of the poem.

Here struts it like a patriot, and talks high  
Of altered subjects, altered property:  
An emblem of that buzzing insect just,  
That mounts the wheel, and thinks she raises dust.  
Can dry bones live, or skeletons produce  
The vital warmth of cuckoldizing juice?  
Slim Phaleg could, and, at the table fed,  
Returned the grateful product to the bed.  
A waiting-man to travelling nobles chose,  
He his own laws would saucily impose,  
'Till bastinadoed back again he went,  
To learn those manners he to teach was sent.  
Chastised he ought to have retreated home,  
But he reads politics to Absalom;  
For never Hebronite, though kicked and scorned,  
To his own country willingly returned.  
But, leaving famished Phaleg to be fed,  
And to talk treason for his daily bread,  
Let Hebron, nay let hell, produce a man  
So made for mischief as Ben-Jochanan;  
A Jew of humble parentage was he,  
By trade a Levite, though of low degree:  
His pride no higher than the desk aspired,  
But for the drudgery of priests was hired  
To read and pray in linen ephod brave,  
And pick up single shekels from the grave.  
Married at last, but finding charge come faster,  
He could not live by God, but changed his master:  
Inspired by want, was made a factious tool,  
They got a villain, and we lost a fool.  
Still violent, whatever cause he took,  
But most against the party he forsook:  
For renegadoes, who ne'er turned by halves,  
Are bound in conscience to be double knaves.  
So this prose prophet took most monstrous pains,  
To let his masters see he earned his gains.  
But as the devil owes all his imps a shame,  
He chose the apostate for his proper theme;

With little pains he made the picture true,  
And from reflection took the rogue he drew.  
A wondrous work, to prove the Jewish nation  
In every age a murmuring generation ;  
To trace them from their infancy of sinning,  
And show them factious from their first beginning.  
To prove they could rebel, and rail, and mock,  
Much to the credit of the chosen flock ;  
A strong authority which must convince,  
That saints own no allegiance to their prince ;  
As 'tis a leading card to make a whore,  
To prove her mother had turned up before.  
But, tell me, did the drunken patriarch bless  
The son that showed his father's nakedness ?  
Such thanks the present church thy pen will give,  
Which proves rebellion was so primitive.  
Must ancient failings be examples made ?  
Then murderers from Cain may learn their trade.  
As thou the heathen and the saint hast drawn,  
Methinks the apostate was the better man ;  
And thy hot father, waving my respect,  
Not of a mother church, but of a sect.  
And such he needs must be of thy inditing,  
This comes of drinking asses' milk and writing,  
If Balak should be called to leave his place,  
As profit is the loudest call of grace,  
His temple, dispossessed of one, would be  
Replenished with seven devils more by thee.

Levi, thou art a load ; I'll lay thee down,  
And show rebellion bare, without a gown ;  
Poor slaves in metre, dull and addle-pated,  
Who rhyme below even David's psalms translated ;  
Some in my speedy pace I must out-run,  
As lame Mephibosheth the wizard's son ;  
To make quick way I'll leap o'er heavy blocks,  
Shun rotten Uzza as I would the pox ;  
And hasten Og and Doeg to rehearse,  
Two fools that crutch their feeble sense on verse ;

Who by my muse to all succeeding times,  
Shall live, in spite of their own dogrel rhymes.

Doeg, though without knowing how or why,  
Made still a blundering kind of melody ;  
Spurred boldly on, and dashed through thick and thin,  
Through sense and nonsense, never out nor in ;  
Free from all meaning, whether good or bad,  
And, in one word, heroically mad,  
He was too warm on picking-work to dwell,  
But fagoted his notions as they fell,  
And, if they rhymed and rattled, all was well.  
Spiteful he is not, though he wrote a satire,  
For still there goes some thinking to ill-nature ;  
He needs no more than birds and beasts to think,  
All his occasions are to eat and drink.  
If he call rogue and rascal from a garret,  
He means you no more mischief than a parrot ;  
The words for friend and foe alike were made,  
To fetter them in verse is all his trade.  
For almonds he'll cry whore to his own mother,  
And call young Absalom king David's brother.  
Let him be gallows-free by my consent,  
And nothing suffer, since he nothing meant ;  
Hanging supposes human soul and reason,  
This animal is below committing treason :  
Shall he be hanged who never could rebel ?  
That's a preferment of Achitophel.  
The woman that \_\_\_\_\_,\*  
Was rightly sentenced by the law to die ;  
But 'twas hard fate that to the gallows led  
The dog, that never heard the statute read.  
Railing in other men may be a crime,  
But ought to pass for mere instinct in him ;  
Instinct he follows, and no farther knows,  
For, to write verse with him is to transpose ;†

\* The revolting termination of this line, which even in Dryden's time must have offended his readers, is omitted.

† It was rather unreasonable to bring this charge against Settle, in

'Twere pity treason at his door to lay,  
*Who makes heaven's gate a lock to its own key;*  
 Let him rail on, let his invective muse  
 Have four-and-twenty letters to abuse,  
 Which, if he jumbles to one line of sense,  
 Indict him of a capital offence.  
 In fire-works give him leave to vent his spite,  
 Those are the only serpents he can write ;  
 The height of his ambition is, we know,  
 But to be master of a puppet-show ;  
 On that one stage his works may yet appear,  
 And a month's harvest keep him all the year.

Now stop your noses, readers, all and some,  
 For here's a tun of midnight work to come,  
 Og from a treason-tavern rolling home.\*  
 Round as a globe, and liquored every chink,  
 Goodly and great he sails behind his link.  
 With all this bulk there's nothing lost in Og,  
 For every inch, that is not fool, is rogue :  
 A monstrous mass of foul corrupted matter,  
 As all the devils had spewed to make the batter.

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a poem abounding in thefts and transpositions. Settle's offence amounted in this instance to nothing more than having called his answer to the First Part, *Absalom Senior; or, Absalom and Achitophel Transposed*. The line in italics is taken from it, and given, somewhat disingenuously, as a serious specimen, although intended by Settle as a travestie of the original.

\* In the *Vindication of the Duke of Guise*, Dryden says, that the only loyal service Shadwell can render to the king is that of increasing the revenue by drinking. 'Og may write against the king if he pleases, so long as he drinks for him ; and his writings will never do the government so much harm as his drinking does it good ; for true subjects will not be much perverted by his libels, but the wine duties rise considerably by his claret.' It is curious enough that this very idea is expanded by Shadwell into a song, in the comedy of *The Woman Captain*.

The king's most faithful subjects we  
 In 's service are not dull ;  
 We drink to show our loyalty,  
 And make his coffers full.  
 Would all his subjects drink like us,  
 We'd make him richer far,  
 More powerful, and more prosperous,  
 Than all the eastern monarchs are.'

When wine has given him courage to blaspheme,  
He curses God, but God before cursed him ;  
And if man could have reason, none has more,  
That made his paunch so rich, and him so poor.  
With wealth he was not trusted, for heaven knew  
What 'twas of old to pamper up a Jew ;  
To what could he on quail and pheasant swell,  
That even on tripe and carrion could rebel ?  
But though heaven made him poor, with reverence  
He never was a poet of God's making ; [speaking,  
The midwife laid her hand on his thick skull,  
With this prophetic blessing—be thou dull ;  
Drink, swear and roar ; forbear no lewd delight  
Fit for thy bulk, do anything but write.  
Thou art of lasting make, like thoughtless men,  
A strong nativity—but for the pen ;  
Eat opium, mingle arsenic in thy drink,  
Still thou mayest live, avoiding pen and ink.  
I see, I see, 'tis counsel given in vain,  
For treason, botched in rhyme, will be thy bane ;  
Rhyme is the rock on which thou art to wreck,  
'Tis fatal to thy fame and to thy neck.  
Why should thy metre good king David blast ?  
A psalm of his will surely be thy last.  
Darest thou presume in verse to meet thy foes,  
Thou whom the penny pamphlet foiled in prose ?  
Doeg, whom God, for mankind's mirth has made,  
O'er-tops thy talent in thy very trade ;  
Doeg, to thee, thy paintings are so coarse,  
A poet is, though he's the poet's horse.  
A double noose thou on thy neck dost pull  
For writing treason, and for writing dull ;  
To die for faction is a common evil,  
But to be hanged for nonsense is the devil :  
Hadst thou the glories of thy king exprest,  
Thy praises had been satire at the best ;  
But thou in clumsy verse, unlickt, unpointed,  
Hast shamefully defied the Lord's anointed :

I will not rake the dunghill of thy crimes,  
 For who would read thy life that reads thy rhymes?  
 But of king David's foes, be this the doom,  
 May all be like the young man Absalom;  
 And for my foes may this their blessing be,  
 To talk like Doeg, and to write like thee.\*

Achitophel each rank, degree, and age,  
 For various ends neglects not to engage;  
 The wise and rich, for purse and counsel brought,  
 The fools and beggars, for their number sought;  
 Who yet not only on the town depends,  
 For even in court the faction had its friends.  
 These thought the places they possessed too small,  
 And in their hearts wished court and king to fall:  
 Whose name the muse, disdaining, holds i' th' dark,  
 Thrust in the villain herd without a mark;  
 With parasites and libel-spawning imps,  
 Intriguing fops, dull jesters, and worse pimps.  
 Disdain the rascal rabble to pursue,  
 Their set cabals are yet a viler crew.  
 See where involved in common smoke they sit;  
 Some for our mirth, some for our satire fit;  
 These gloomy, thoughtful, and on mischief bent,  
 While those for mere good fellowship frequent  
 The appointed club, can let sedition pass,  
 Sense, nonsense, anything to employ the glass;  
 And who believe in their dull honest hearts,  
 The rest talk treason but to show their parts;  
 Who ne'er had wit or will for mischief yet,  
 But pleased to be reputed of a set.

But in the sacred annals of our plot,  
 Industrious Arod never be forgot:

\* Shadwell had considerable powers of conversation, and it may be inferred, from the contrast drawn here, that Settle appeared to disadvantage in society. ‘If Shadwell,’ said Lord Rochester, ‘had burnt all he wrote, and printed all he spoke, he would have had more wit and humour than any other poet.’

The labours of this midnight-magistrate  
May vie with Corah's to preserve the state.  
In search of arms he failed not to lay hold  
On war's most powerful dangerous weapon, gold.  
And last, to take from Jebusites all odds,  
Their altars pillaged, stole their very gods.  
Oft would he cry, when treasure he surprised,  
'Tis Baalish gold in David's coin disguised.  
Which to his house with richer relics came,  
While lumber idols only fed the flame :  
For our wise rabble ne'er took pains to inquire,  
What 'twas he burnt, so it made a rousing fire,  
With which our elder was enriched no more  
Than false Gehazi with the Syrian's store ;  
So poor, that when our choosing tribes were met,  
Even for his stinking votes he ran in debt ;  
For meat the wicked, and, as authors think,  
The saints he choused for his electing drink ;  
Thus every shift and subtle method past,  
And all to be no Zaken at the last.

Now, raised on Tyre's sad ruins, Pharaoh's pride  
Soared high, his legions threatening far and wide ;  
As when a battering storm engendered high,  
By winds upheld, hangs hovering in the sky,  
Is gazed upon by every trembling swain,  
This for his vineyard fears, and that his grain,  
For blooming plants, and flowers new opening ; these  
For lambs yeaned lately, and far-labouring bees :  
To guard his stock each to the gods does call,  
Uncertain where the fire-charged clouds will fall :  
Even so the doubtful nations watch his arms,  
With terror each expecting his alarms.  
Where, Judah, where was now thy lion's roar ?  
Thou only couldst the captive lands restore ;  
But thou, with inbred broils and faction prest,  
From Egypt need'st a guardian with the rest.  
Thy prince from sanhedrims no trust allowed,  
Too much the representers of the crowd,

Who for their own defence give no supply,  
But what the crown's prerogatives must buy ;  
As if their monarch's rights to violate  
More needful were, than to preserve the state !  
From present dangers they divert their care,  
And all their fears are of the royal heir ;  
Whom now the reigning malice of his foes,  
Unjudged would sentence, and ere crowned depose.  
Religion the pretence, but their decree  
To bar his reign, whate'er his faith shall be.  
By sanhedrims and clamorous crowds thus prest,  
What passions rent the righteous David's breast ?  
Who knows not how to oppose or to comply,  
Unjust to grant, and dangerous to deny !  
How near in this dark juncture Israel's fate,  
Whose peace one sole expedient could create,  
Which yet the extremest virtue did require,  
Even of that prince whose downfall they conspire ?  
His absence David does with tears advise,  
To appease their rage. Undaunted he complies.  
Thus he, who, prodigal of blood and ease,  
A royal life exposed to winds and seas,  
At once contending with the waves and fire,  
And heading danger in the wars of Tyre,  
Inglorious now forsakes his native sand,  
And like an exile, quits the promised land.  
Our monarch scarce from pressing tears refrains,  
And painfully his royal state maintains.  
Who now embracing on the extremest shore,  
Almost revokes what he enjoined before :  
Concludes, at last, more trust to be allowed  
To storms and seas than to the raging crowd.  
Forbear, rash muse, the parting scene to draw,  
With silence charmed as deep as theirs that saw !  
Not only our attending nobles weep,  
But hardy sailors swell with tears the deep ;  
The tide restrained her course, and more amazed,  
The twin-stars on the royal brothers gazed ;

While this sole fear —  
Does trouble to our suffering hero bring,  
Lest next the popular rage oppress the king.  
Thus parting, each for the other's danger grieved,  
The shore the king, and seas the prince received.\*  
Go, injured hero, while propitious gales,  
Soft as thy consort's breath, inspire thy sails  
Well may she trust her beauties on a flood,  
Where thy triumphant fleets so oft have rode!  
Safe on thy breast reclined, her rest be deep,  
Rocked, like a Nereid, by the waves asleep;  
While happiest dreams her fancy entertain,  
And to Elysian fields convert the main!  
Go, injured hero! while the shores of Tyre  
At thy approach so silent shall admire.  
Who on thy thunder still their thoughts employ,  
And greet thy landing with a trembling joy.

On heroes thus the prophet's fate is thrown,  
Admired by every nation but their own;  
Yet while our factious Jews his worth deny,  
Their aching conscience gives their tongue the lie.  
Even in the worst of men the noblest parts  
Confess him, and he triumphs in their hearts,  
Whom to his king the best respects commend  
Of subject, soldier, kinsman, prince and friend;  
All sacred names of most divine esteem,  
And to perfection all sustained by him;  
Wise, just, and constant, courtly without art,  
Swift to discern and to reward desert;

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\* This pathetic account of the parting of the royal brothers is an amiable fiction. All accounts agree that the Duke of York was sensibly affected, as any man might be on going into exile under such alarming circumstances. But his emotion sprang from a more selfish source than his anguish at the separation from his brother. As for Charles, he was too glad to be relieved of his presence to shed tears on the occasion, and testified it by an order under his own hand for his departure, in which he says, 'I think proper to give it you under my hand, that I expect this compliance from you, and desire it may be as soon as you conveniently can.'

No hour of his in fruitless ease destroyed,  
But on the noblest subjects still employed ;  
Whose steady soul ne'er learnt to separate  
Between his monarch's interest and the state,  
But heaps those blessings on the royal head,  
Which he well knows must be on subjects shed.

On what pretence could then the vulgar rage  
Against his worth, and native rights engage ?  
Religious fears their argument are made,  
Religious fears his sacred rights invade !  
Of future superstition they complain,  
And Jebusitic worship in his reign :  
With such alarms his foes the crowd deceive,  
With dangers fright, which not themselves believe.

Since nothing can our sacred rites remove,  
Whate'er the faith of the successor prove :  
Our Jews their ark shall undisturbed retain,  
At least while their religion is their gain,  
Who know by old experience Baal's commands  
Not only claimed their conscience but their lands ;  
They grudge God's tithes, how therefore shall they  
An idol full possession of the field ? [yield  
Grant such a prince enthroned, we must confess  
The people's sufferings than that monarch's less,  
Who must to hard conditions still be bound,  
And for his quiet with the crowd compound ;  
Or should his thoughts to tyranny incline,  
Where are the means to compass the design ?  
Our crown's revenues are too short a store,  
And jealous sanhedrims would give no more.

As vain our fears of Egypt's potent aid ;  
Not so has Pharaoh learnt ambition's trade,  
Nor ever with such measures can comply,  
As shock the common rules of policy.  
None dread like him the growth of Israel's king ;  
And he alone sufficient aids can bring ;  
Who knows that prince to Egypt can give law,  
That on our stubborn tribes his yoke could draw :

At such profound expense he has not stood,  
Nor dyed for this his hands so deep in blood ; [take,  
Would ne'er through wrong and right his progress  
Grudge his own rest, and keep the world awake,  
To fix a lawless prince on Judah's throne,  
First to invade our rights, and then his own ;  
His dear-gained conquests cheaply to despoil,  
And reap the harvest of his crimes and toil.  
We grant his wealth vast as our ocean's sand,  
And curse its fatal influence on our land,  
Which our bribed Jews so numerously partake,  
That even an host his pensioners would make ;  
From these deceivers our divisions spring,  
Our weakness, and the growth of Egypt's king :  
These, with pretended friendship to the state,  
Our crowds' suspicion of their prince create,  
Both pleased and frightened with the specious cry,  
To guard their sacred rights and property ;  
To ruin, thus the chosen flock are sold,  
While wolves are ta'en for guardians of the fold ;  
Seduced by these we groundlessly complain,  
And loath the manna of a gentle reign :  
Thus our forefathers' crooked paths are trod,  
We trust our prince no more than they their God.  
But all in vain our reasoning prophets preach,  
To those whom sad experience ne'er could teach,  
Who can commence new broils in bleeding scars,  
And fresh remembrance of intestine wars ;  
When the same household mortal foes did yield,  
And brothers stained with brothers' blood the field ;  
When sons' curst steel the fathers' gore did stain,  
And mothers mourned for sons by fathers slain !  
When thick as Egypt's locusts on the sand,  
Our tribes lay slaughtered through the promised land.  
Whose few survivors with worse fate remain,  
To drag the bondage of a tyrant's reign ;  
Which scene of woes, unknowing, we renew,  
And madly, even those ills we fear, pursue ;

While Pharaoh laughs at our domestic broils,  
And safely crowds his tents with nations' spoils,  
Yet our fierce Sanhedrim in restless rage,  
Against our absent hero still engage,  
And chiefly urge, such did their frenzy prove,  
The only suit their prince forbids to move ;  
Which till obtained they cease affairs of state,  
And real dangers wave for groundless hate.  
Long David's patience waits relief to bring,  
With all the indulgence of a lawful king,  
Expecting till the troubled waves would cease,  
But found the raging billows still increase.  
The crowd, whose insolence forbearance swells,  
While he forgives too far, almost rebels.  
At last his deep resentments silence broke,  
The imperial palace shook, while thus he spoke :

‘ Then Justice wake, and Rigour take her time,  
For lo ! our mercy is become our crime.  
While halting punishment her stroke delays,  
Our sovereign right, heaven’s sacred trust, decays !  
For whose support even subjects’ interest calls,  
Woe to that kingdom where the monarch falls !  
That prince, who yields the least of regal sway,  
So far his people’s freedom does betray.  
Right lives by law, and law subsists by power ;  
Disarm the shepherd, wolves the flock devour.  
Hard lot of empire o’er a stubborn race,  
Which heaven itself in vain has tried with grace !  
When will our reason’s long-charmed eyes unclose,  
And Israel judge between her friends and foes ?  
When shall we see expired deceivers’ sway,  
And credit what our God and monarchs say ?  
Dissembled patriots bribed with Egypt’s gold,  
Even Sanhedrims in blind obedience hold ;  
Those patriots’ falsehood in their actions see,  
And judge by the pernicious fruit the tree ;  
If ought for which so loudly they declaim,  
Religion, laws, and freedom, were their aim ;

Our senates in due methods they had led,  
To avoid those mischiefs which they seemed to dread ;  
But first, ere yet they propped the sinking state,  
To impeach and charge, as urged by private hate,  
Proves that they ne'er believed the fears they prest,  
But barbarously destroyed the nation's rest.  
Oh ! whither will ungoverned senates drive ?  
And to what bounds licentious votes arrive ?  
When their injustice we are pressed to share,  
The monarch urged to exclude the lawful heir ;  
Are princes thus distinguished from the crowd,  
And this the privilege of royal blood ?  
But grant we should confirm the wrongs they press,  
His sufferings yet were than the people's less ;  
Condemned for life the murdering sword to wield,  
And on their heirs entail a bloody field.  
Thus madly their own freedom they betray,  
And for the oppression which they fear make way ;  
Succession fixed by heaven, the kingdom's bar,  
Which, once dissolved, admits the flood of war ;  
Waste, rapine, spoil, without the assault begin,  
And our mad tribes supplant the fence within.  
Since, then, their good they will not understand,  
'Tis time to take the monarch's power in hand ;  
Authority and force to join with skill,  
And save the lunatics against their will.  
The same rough means that 'swage the crowd, appease  
Our senates, raging with the crowd's disease.  
Henceforth unbiassed measures let them draw  
From no false gloss, but genuine text of law ;  
Nor urge those crimes upon religion's score,  
Themselves so much in J ebustites abhor.  
Whom laws convict, and only they, shall bleed,  
Nor pharisees by pharisees be freed.  
Impartial justice from our throne shall shower,  
All shall have right, and we our sovereign power.'

He said ; the attendants heard with awful joy,  
And glad presages their fixed thoughts employ ;

From Hebron now the suffering heir returned,  
A realm that long with civil discord mourned ;  
Till his approach, like some arriving God,  
Composed and healed the place of his abode ;  
The deluge checked that to Judea spread,  
And stopped sedition at the fountain's head.  
Thus in forgiving David's paths he drives,  
And chased from Israel, Israel's peace contrives.  
The field confessed his power in arms before,  
And seas proclaimed his triumphs to the shore ;  
As nobly has his sway in Hebron shown,  
How fit to inherit godlike David's throne.  
Through Sion's streets his glad arrival's spread,  
And conscious faction shrinks her snaky head ;  
His train their sufferings think o'erpaid to see  
The crowd's applause with virtue once agree.  
Success charms all, but zeal for worth distrest,  
A virtue proper to the brave and best ;  
'Mongst whom was Jothran, Jothran always bent,  
To serve the crown, and loyal by descent ;  
Whose constancy so firm, and conduct just,  
Deserved at once two royal masters' trust ;  
Who Tyre's proud arms had manfully withheld  
On seas, and gathered laurels from the flood ;  
Of learning yet, no portion was denied,  
Friend to the muses and the muses' pride.  
Nor can Benaiah's worth forgotten lie,  
Of steady soul when public storms were high ;  
Whose conduct while the Moor fierce onsets made,  
Secured at once our honour and our trade.  
Such were the chiefs who most his sufferings mourned,  
And viewed with silent joy the prince returned ;  
While those, that sought his absence to betray,  
Press first, their nauseous false respects to pay ;  
Him still the officious hypocrites molest,  
And with malicious duty break his rest.  
While real transports thus his friends employ,  
And foes are loud in their dissembled joy,

His triumphs, so resounded far and near,  
Missed not his young ambitious rival's ear ;  
And as, when joyful hunters' clamorous train,  
Some slumbering lion wakes in Moab's plain,  
Who oft had forced the bold assailants yield,  
And scattered his pursuers through the field,  
Disdaining, furls his mane, and tears the ground,  
His eyes inflaming all the desert round,  
With roar of seas, directs his chasers' way,  
Provokes from far, and dares them to the fray ;  
Such rage stormed now in Absalom's fierce breast ;  
Such indignation his fired eyes confess.  
Where now was the instructor of his pride ?  
Slept the old pilot in so rough a tide,  
Whose wiles had from the happy shore betrayed,  
And thus on shelves the credulous youth conveyed ?  
In deep revolving thoughts he weighs his state,  
Secure of craft, nor doubts to baffle fate ;  
At least, if his stormed bark must go adrift,  
To baulk his charge, and for himself to shift,  
In which his dexterous wit had oft been shown,  
And in the wreck of kingdoms saved his own ;  
But now with more than common danger prest,  
Of various resolutions stands possest,  
Perceives the crowd's unstable zeal decay,  
Lest their recanting chief the cause betray,  
Who on a father's grace his hopes may ground,  
And for his pardon with their heads compound.  
Him, therefore, ere his fortune slip her time,  
The statesman plots to engage in some bold crime  
Past pardon ; whether to attempt his bed,  
Or threat with open arms the royal head ;  
Or other daring method, and unjust,  
That may confirm him in the people's trust.  
But, failing thus to ensnare him, nor secure  
How long his foiled ambition may endure,  
Plots next to lay him by as past his date,  
And try some new defender's luckier fate ;

Whose hopes with equal toil he would pursue,  
Nor cares what claimer's crowned, except the true.  
Wake, Absalom, approaching ruin shun,  
And see, oh see, for whom thou art undone!  
How are thy honours and thy fame betrayed,  
The property of desperate villains made!  
Lost power and conscious fears their crimes create,  
And guilt in them was little less than fate;  
But why shouldst thou, from every grievance free,  
Forsake thy vineyards for their stormy sea?  
For thee did Canaan's milk and honey flow,  
Love dressed thy bowers, and laurels sought thy brow;  
Preferment, wealth, and power thy vassals were,  
And of a monarch all things but the care.  
Oh, should our crimes again that curse draw down,  
And rebel arms once more attempt the crown,  
Sure ruin waits unhappy Absalon,  
Alike by conquest or defeat undone.  
Who could relentless see such youth and charms  
Expire, with wretched fate in impious arms?  
A prince so formed, with earth's and heaven's applause,  
To triumph o'er crowned heads in David's cause.  
Or, grant him victor, still his hopes must fail,  
Who, conquering, would not for himself prevail;  
The faction whom he trusts for future sway,  
Him and the public would alike betray;  
Amongst themselves divide the captive state,  
And found their hydra empire in his fate!  
Thus having beat the clouds with painful flight,  
The pitied youth with sceptres in his sight,  
(So have their cruel politics decreed,)  
Must by that crew, that made him guilty, bleed!  
For, could their pride brook any prince's sway,  
Whom, but mild David, would they choose to obey?  
Who once at such a gentle reign repine,  
The fall of monarchy itself design:  
From hate to that their reformatioons spring,  
And David not their grievance, but the king.

Seized now with panic fear the faction lies,  
Lest this clear truth strike Absalom's charmed eyes;  
Lest he perceive, from long enchantment free,  
What all beside the flattered youth must see.  
But whate'er doubts his troubled bosom swell,  
Fair carriage still became Achitophel;  
Who now an envious festival instals,  
And to survey their strength the faction calls,  
Which fraud, religious worship too, must gild;  
But oh how weakly does sedition build!  
For, lo! the royal mandate issues forth,  
Dashing at once their treason, zeal, and mirth.—  
So have I seen disastrous chance invade,  
Where careful emmets had their forage laid;  
(Whether fierce Vulcan's rage the furzy plain  
Had seized, engendered by some careful swain;  
Or swelling Neptune lawless inroads made,  
And to their cell of store his flood conveyed;)  
The commonwealth, broke up, distracted go,  
And, in wild haste, their loaded mates o'erthrew:  
Even so scattered guests confusedly meet,  
With boiled, baked, roast, all jostling in the street;  
Dejected all, and ruefully dismayed,  
For shekel, without treat or treason paid.

Sedition's dark eclipse now fainter shows,  
More bright each hour the royal planet grows,  
Of force the clouds of envy to disperse,  
In kind conjunction of assisting stars.  
Here, labouring muse! those glorious chiefs relate,  
That turned the doubtful scale of David's fate;  
The rest of that illustrious band rehearse,  
Immortalized in laurelled Asaph's verse.  
Hard task! yet will not I thy flight recal;  
View heaven, and then enjoy thy glorious fall.

First, write Bezaliel, whose illustrious name  
Forestals our praise, and gives his poet fame.  
The Kenites' rocky province his command,  
A barren limb of fertile Canaan's land;

Which, for its generous natives, yet could be  
Held worthy such a president as he.  
Bezaliel with each grace and virtue fraught,  
Serene his looks, serene his life and thought;  
On whom so largely nature heaped her store,  
There scarce remained for arts to give him more.  
To aid the crown and state his greatest zeal,  
His second care, that service to conceal;  
Of dues observant, firm to every trust,  
And to the needy always more than just;  
Who truth from specious falsehood can divide,  
Has all the gownsmen's skill without their pride;  
Thus, crowned with worth, from heights of honour won,  
Sees all his glories copied in his son,  
Whose forward fame should every muse engage,  
Whose youth boasts skill denied to others' age.  
Men, manners, language, books of noblest kind,  
Already are the conquests of his mind.  
Whose loyalty before its date, was prime,  
Nor waited the dull course of rolling time;  
The monster faction early he dismayed,  
And David's cause long since confessed his aid.

Brave Abdael o'er the prophet's school was placed;  
Abdael, with all his father's virtue graced;  
A hero who, while stars looked wondering down,  
Without one Hebrew's blood restored the crown.  
That praise was his; what therefore did remain  
For following chiefs, but boldly to maintain  
That crown restored? And in this rank of fame,  
Brave Abdael with the first a place must claim.  
Proceed, illustrious, happy chief, proceed!  
Foreseize the garlands for thy brow decreed;  
While the inspired tribe attend, with noblest strain,  
To register the glories thou shalt gain:  
For sure the dew shall Gilboah's hills forsake,  
And Jordan mix his stream with Sodom's lake;  
Or seas retired their secret stores disclose,  
And to the sun their scaly brood expose;

Or, swelled above the cliffs, their billows raise,  
Before the muses leave their patron's praise.

Eliab our next labour does invite,  
And hard the task to do Eliab right.  
Long with the royal wanderer he roved,  
And firm in all the turns of fortune proved.  
Such ancient service, and desert so large,  
Well claimed the royal household for his charge.  
His age with only one mild heiress blessed,  
In all the bloom of smiling nature dressed ;  
And blessed again to see his flower allied  
To David's stock, and made young Othriel's bride !  
The bright restorer of his father's youth,  
Devoted to a son's and subject's truth :  
Resolved to bear that prize of duty home,  
So bravely sought, while sought by Absalom.  
Ah, prince ! the illustrious planet of thy birth,  
And thy more powerful virtue, guard thy worth,  
May no Achitophel thy ruin boast !  
Israel too much in one such wreck has lost.

Even envy must consent to Helon's worth,  
Whose soul, though Egypt glories in his birth,  
Could for our captive ark its zeal retain,  
And Pharaoh's altars in their pomp disdain :  
To slight his gods was small ; with nobler pride,  
He all the allurements of his court defied.  
Whom profit nor example could betray,  
But Israel's friend, and true to David's sway.  
What acts of favour in his province fall,  
On merit he confers, and freely all.

Our list of nobles next let Amri grace,  
Whose merits claimed the Abethdin's high place ;  
Who, with a loyalty that did excel,  
Brought all the endowments of Achitophel.  
Sincere was Amri, and not only knew,  
But Israel's sanctions into practice drew ;  
Our laws that did a boundless ocean seem,  
Were coasted all, and fathomed all by him.

No rabbin speaks like him their mystic sense,  
So just, and with such charms of eloquence ;  
To whom the double blessing does belong,  
With Moses' inspiration, Aaron's tongue.

Than Sheva none more loyal zeal have shown,  
Wakeful as Judah's lion for the crown,  
Who for that cause still combats in his age,  
For which his youth with danger did engage.  
In vain our factious priests the cant revive ;  
In vain seditious scribes with libel strive  
To inflame the crowd, while he, with watchful eye,  
Observes, and shoots their treasons as they fly ;  
Their weekly frauds his keen replies detect ;  
He und deceives more fast than they infect.  
So Moses, when the pest on legions preyed,  
Advanced his signal, and the plague was stayed.

Once more, my fainting muse, thy pinions try,  
And strength's exhausted store let love supply.  
What tribute, Asaph, shall we render thee ?  
We'll crown thee with a wreath from thy own tree !  
Thy laurel grove no envy's flash can blast ;\*  
The song of Asaph shall for ever last !  
With wonder late posterity shall dwell  
On Absalom and false Achitophel :  
Thy strains shall be our slumbering prophets' dream ;  
And when our Sion virgins sing their theme,

\* In some verses prefixed to BROWNE'S *Britannia's Pastorals*, Selden turns a pretty conceit on the old poetical faith in the sacredness of the laurel. He makes the Muse entreat a corresponding garland for the poet's readers :—

‘ Next She prays  
His Readers be with Rose and Myrtle crowned !  
No Willow touch them ! As his Baies are free  
From wrong of Bolts, so may their Chaplets be ! ’

‘ Baies (faire readers,)’ he adds in a note, ‘ being the materials of poets’ garlands, (as myrtles and roses are for enjoying lovers, and the fruitless willow for them which your unconstancie, too oft, makes most unhappy) are supposed not subject to any hurt of Jupiter’s thunderbolts, as other trees are.’

Our jubilees shall with thy verse be graced ;  
The song of Asaph shall for ever last !

How fierce his satire loosed ; restrained, how tame ;  
How tender of the offending young man's fame !  
How well his worth, and brave adventures styled ;  
Just to his virtues, to his error mild.  
No page of thine that fears the strictest view,  
But teems with just reproof, or praise, as due ;  
Not Eden could a fairer prospect yield,  
All paradise, without one barren field :  
Whose wit the censure of his foes has past,  
The song of Asaph shall for ever last !

What praise for such rich strains shall we allow ?  
What just rewards the grateful crown bestow ?  
While bees in flowers rejoice, and flowers in dew.  
While stars and fountains to their course are true,  
While Judah's throne, and Sion's rock stand fast,  
The song of Asaph and the fame shall last.\*

Still Hebron's honoured happy soil retains  
Our royal hero's beauteous dear remains :  
Who now sails off, with winds nor wishes slack,  
To bring his sufferings' bright companion back.  
But ere such transport can our sense employ,  
A bitter grief must poison half our joy ;  
Nor can our coasts restored those blessings see  
Without a bribe to envious destiny !  
Cursed Sodom's doom for ever fix the tide,  
Where, by inglorious chance, the valiant died.  
Give not insulting Askalon to know,  
Nor let Gath's daughters triumph in our woe !

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\* It is to be hoped that, whatever revision Dryden bestowed upon the rest of the poem, he did not superintend this piebald panegyric upon himself. The whole passage is a flagrant violation of good taste. To say nothing of suffering himself to be praised for being tender to the 'young man,' of accepting the questionable compliment that his satire became 'tame' when it was 'restrained,' and of sanctioning the figure of a fountain true to its course, one would rather not suppose that he was a consenting party to the line which asks the 'grateful crown' what 'just rewards' it is prepared to confer upon him.

No sailor with the news swell Egypt's pride,  
By what inglorious fate our valiant died!  
Weep, Arnon! Jordan weep thy fountains dry,  
While Sion's rock dissolves for a supply.

Calm were the elements, night's silence deep,  
The waves scarce murmuring, and the winds asleep;  
Yet fate for ruin takes so still an hour,  
And treacherous sands the princely bark devour;  
Then death unworthy seized a generous race,  
To virtue's scandal, and the stars' disgrace!  
Oh! had the indulgent powers vouchsafed to yield,  
Instead of faithless shelves, a listed field;  
A listed field of heaven's and David's foes,  
Fierce as the troops that did his youth oppose,  
Each life had on his slaughtered heap retired,  
Not tamely, and unconquering thus expired.  
But destiny is now their only foe,  
And dying, even o'er that they triumph too;  
With loud last breaths their master's 'scape applaud,  
Of whom kind force could scarce the fates defraud;  
Who, for such followers lost, O matchless mind!  
At his own safety now almost repined!  
Say, royal sir, by all your fame in arms,  
Your praise in peace, and by Urania's charms,  
If all your sufferings past so nearly prest,  
Or pierced with half so painful grief your breast?

Thus some diviner muse her hero forms,  
Not soothed with soft delights, but tossed in storms;  
Nor stretched on roses in the myrtle grove,  
Nor crowns his days with mirth, his nights with love,  
But far removed in thundering camps is found,  
His slumbers short, his bed the herbless ground:  
In tasks of danger always seen the first,  
Feeds from the hedge, and slakes with ice his thirst.  
Long must his patience strive with fortune's rage,  
And long opposing gods themselves engage;  
Must see his country flame, his friends destroyed,  
Before the promised empire be enjoyed:

Such toil of fate must build a man of fame,  
And such, to Israel's crown, the godlike David came.

What sudden beams dispel the clouds so fast,  
Whose drenching rains laid all our vineyards waste?  
The spring so far behind her course delayed,  
On the instant is in all her bloom arrayed;  
The winds breathe low, the element serene,  
Yet mark! what motion in the waves is seen  
Thronging and busy as Hyblæan swarms,  
Or straggled soldiers summoned to their arms.  
See where the princely bark in loosest pride,  
With all her guardian fleet, adorns the tide!  
High on her deck the royal lovers stand,  
Our crimes to pardon ere they touched our land.  
Welcome to Israel and to David's breast!  
Here all your toils, here all your sufferings rest.

This year did Ziloah rule Jerusalem,  
And boldly all sedition's surges stem,  
Howe'er encumbered with a viler pair  
Than Ziph or Shimei, to assist the chair;  
Yet Ziloah's loyal labours so prevailed  
That faction at the next election failed,  
When even the common cry did justice sound,  
And merit by the multitude was crowned:  
With David then was Israel's peace restored.  
Crowds mourned their error, and obeyed their lord.

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